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OUR SAVIOUR's DIVINE SERMON ON THE *MOUNT*,

CONTAIN'D

In the Vth, VIth, and VIIth Chapters of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, Explained, and the Practice of it Recommended in diverſe Sermons and Diſcourſes.

VOLUME IV.

CONTAINING

XXIV SERMONS from *Mat.* VI. *Ver.* 9. to the End of that *Chapter*.

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V. 11. *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

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V. 20.

V. 20. *But lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through and ſteal.*

V. 21. *For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.*

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V. 31. *Therefore take no Thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?*

V. 32. *(For after all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth*

knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.

V. 33. *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.*

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SERMON I.

MAT. VI. 9.

After this Manner therefore pray ye: *Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name.*

V. 10. *Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

V. 11. *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

V. 12. *And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.*

V. 13. *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil; for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever.* Amen.

The First Sermon on this Text.

THIS excellent Form of Prayer being compoſed and dictated by our Lord himſelf to his Diſciples, deſerves, on that Account, a very particular Regard, and therefore I ſhall apply my ſelf to as diligent an Explication of it as I can.

But before I come to ſpeak to the particular Petitions, there are ſeveral good Things we may obſerve from it in general, which becauſe I think they will not ſo properly fall in from any one of the Parts, as from the whole, I ſhall therefore conſider at this Time, before we enter on the Particulars.

I. The firſt Thing then I obſerve from this Prayer, is concerning the Lawfulneſs and Uſefulneſs of Set Forms of Prayer. For, taking this Inſtitution of our Saviour's at the loweſt, namely, that it was a proper Help for his weak Diſciples, to aſſiſt them, till the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, when it is to be ſuppoſed they would learn to walk alone, without Leading-ſtrings, and to frame Prayers of their own, fitted for all Occaſions; taking it, I ſay, at preſent for no more but this, as a ſeaſonable Supply to the Infirmities of his Diſciples, I argue from thence for the Uſe and Conveniency of Set Forms of Devotion at this Day. For

(1.) If we conſider the Circumſtances of the Church, and what the Generality of Chriſtians is, we muſt confeſs they want as much Aſſiſtance in their Devotions now, as our Saviour's Diſciples did then. If there are any endowed with larger Meaſures of the Spirit, we muſt be ſenſible that there are but very few ſuch, in compariſon of the far greater Number of weak Chriſtians, who want the Help

Help of better Compoſures for Devotion, than they themſelves can frame.

(2.) If we conſider the Difficulty of forming and framing our Devotions aright, we ſhall be convinced that well compoſed Forms of Devotion are very uſeful. There is nothing perhaps we are more ignorant of, than the Nature of God, and the right Manner of addreſſing him. It was an old Obſervation and Complaint of ſome wiſe Heathens, that Men mixed their own corrupt Sentiments and Deſires in their Prayers to their Gods; nay, that they would put up ſuch Prayers to their Gods, as they would be aſhamed to ſpeak out, and to own to Men: Prayers, diſhonourable to God, and hurtful to the Perſons that preſent them, and to all their Neighbours, who would have been very much injured by the Grant of ſuch uncharitable Petitions, as Men, when left to themſelves, would be apt to preſent to God Almighty. And it was not only the Heathens were guilty of this, but the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, the beſt of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who made ſuch long Prayers, as if they underſtood not that *Our heavenly Father knows what Things we have need of, before we ask him.*

(3.) Let us conſider that the Jewiſh Church, in our Saviour's Days, uſed ſeveral Set Forms of Devotion, which our Saviour was ſo far from reproving, that he himſelf imitated them, taking moſt of this excellent Form of Prayer out of the *Jewiſh* Lyturgies, as has been obſerved by ſeveral, who

are well acquainted with that Sort of Learning. *John* the Baptiſt too taught his Diſciples Set Forms of Prayer, as we may gather from that Deſire of our Lord's Diſciples, *Luk.* xi. 1. *Lord teach us to pray, as* John *alſo taught his Diſciples.* Upon which Requeſt our Saviour taught them this ſame Prayer. The Primitive Church uſed always Lyturgies, or Set Forms, ſeveral of which are preſerved to this Day: And not only the *Romiſh*, but the *Greek* and the Reformed Churches too, every one of them have their Set Forms. Which makes it ſo much the ſtranger, that the Preſbyterians, Independents, Anabaptiſts, and Quakers, thoſe late Sects among us, ſhould muſter up This as an Objection againſt the Church of *England*, that ſhe has preſcribed a Form of Common-Prayer.

(4.) But as to the Preſbyterians, it is very obſervable, that after they had preached and wrote a greal deal againſt Set Forms, they found it neceſſary at laſt, (to prevent the Nonſenſe, Raſhneſs, and other Inconveniencies of extemporary Effuſions) to preſcribe Forms of their own, by the Name of *a Directory* for the publick Worſhip of God.

So much for the firſt Obſervation I made, that Set Forms of Prayer are neither uſeleſs nor unlawful.

As this firſt Obſervation is made from our Saviour's compoſing a Form for the Uſe of his Diſciples, the next three general Obſervations I ſhall make, ſhall be from the Connexion of this Prayer with

with what went before. Our Saviour had in the Context reprehended three Errors in the Devotions of thoſe Times. One was a phariſaical Oſtentation; the other the ſpending Devotion in Words, without minding the Sincerity and Intenſeneſs of Affections; the third was a preſcribing to God, in many Particulars which he knew better than we, and before we ask him. Now in oppoſition to theſe Errors, and with a direct Deſign to amend them, as appears by the Particle, Therefore, *After this Manner therefore pray ye*; in oppoſition to theſe Errors, I ſay, there are three Things we may obſerve,

1. In oppoſition to Oſtentation, that our Saviour calls us away from the Eyes of Men, to mind *Our Father which is in Heaven.*

2. That in oppoſition to vain Repetitions, and a great Luxuriancy of Words, he has ſet us a Model of a very ſhort compendious Prayer.

3. That in oppoſition to our preſcribing to God in a great many minute Particulars, we are taught here to propoſe our Wants and Requeſts in general Terms, leaving the Particulars to Almighty God, to anſwer thoſe Wants in which particular Manner he pleaſes. Now then,

II. The ſecond general Obſervation I make from this Prayer, is, that we are called off from minding the Eyes of Men, to mind only *Our Father which is in Heaven.* In our Prayers our Buſi-

neſs is ſolely with God; and therefore, laying aſide Pride, and Vanity, and Affectation to be thought pious and devout; and laying aſide all worldly Deſigns, of which the *Phariſees* were full, who *for a Pretence made long Prayers that they might devour Widows Houſes*; let us open our Hearts to God, who is infinitely wiſe to know all our Wants, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good and willing to relieve them. And the Conſideration, that it is to him, and to him only, that we ſpeak, will be a good Direction as to all the other Rules we are to obſerve in our Devotions.

III. The third general Obſervation I would make, relates to the Shortneſs of our Prayers: *After this Manner therefore pray ye*; q. d. Seeing therefore ye have, or ought to have better Notions of God than that he wants to be either informed, or perſuaded by us; or that he is delighted with a Fluency of Words and Rhetorick, as Men are; let us addreſs ourſelves to him accordingly, more with Vehemency and Ardency of Affections, than with many Words: And accordingly I give you an Example here of a Prayer very ſhort and ſubſtantial.

Before I leave this Obſervation, the Uſefulneſs of this Prayer, from its Brevity, is to be conſidered; notwithſtanding ſomething I ſaid formerly on this Head. And here I can eaſily diſcern a threefold Uſe of Brevity.

(1.) That

(1.) That it ſuits better with the Conceptions we ought to have of Almighty God.

(2.) That it conſults better our own Weakneſs and Infirmities.

(3.) That it gives us a truer Notion of Prayer and Devotion.

(1.) Firſt, Few Words in Prayer ſuit better with the Conceptions we ought to have of Almighty God. If he were a Being that did not concern himſelf with Human Affairs, but as he is appealed to, and ſollicited to conſider our Buſineſs; or if, like ſome of the Princes of this World, he were ſo taken up in minding the great and weighty Affairs of State, that he had no Leaſure to attend to our little Concerns; or if he were a Being drowſy or ſleepy, or diverted with other Things, than the Addreſſes of his Creatures; (which ſeems to be the Notion the Prieſts of *Baal* had of him, and which *Elijah* mocked them for: (*a*) *Cry aloud*, ſays he, *for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or he is in a Journey, or peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked.*) Or if God were a Being, like ſome Men, dull of Apprehenſion, that did not underſtand a Thing, unleſs it were inculcated over and over again, and explained with Abundance of Care to their weak Apprehenſions. Or if he were a Being hard to be moved, as ſome Men are, to

(*a*) 1 Kings xviii. 27.

come to Account, and to pay their Debts, except they are wearied out with Abundance of Dunning and Importunity. Or if he were to be cajoled and flattered, as ſeveral inferiour Beings are with fair Words, and a ſmooth Tongue: Then indeed there might be ſome good Ground for a great many Words in our Addreſſes to Almighty God. But all theſe are very unworthy Notions of God, and we are taught to have quite other Conceptions of him, namely, that (*a*) *His Eyes are upon the Ways of Men, and that he ſeeth all his Goings:* Nay, that (*b*) *the Eyes of the Lord are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good.* And therefore there is no Occaſion of Words to ſtir up his Attention. That the ſmalleſt and moſt minute Things, as well as the greateſt, fall under the Care of his Providence. (*c*) *Not ſo much as a Sparrow falls to the Ground without him*; and that *the very Hairs of our Head are all numbred:* And therefore there is no fear that the minding of greater Affairs will ſo employ him, as to make him forgetful of our leſſer ones. He is *The Searcher of Hearts, and Trier of the Reins.* (*d*) *He knows our Down-ſitting, and Up-riſing, and underſtands our very Thoughts afar off.* So that there is no Occaſion to explain Matters minutely to him. (*e*) He runs out and embraces his returning Prodigals, and even prevents their fine Speeches: He is

(*a*) Job. xxxiv. 21. (*b*) Prov. xv. 3, (*c*) Mat. x. 29.
(*d*) Pſal. cxxxix. 2. (*e*) Luke xv. 20.

more

more ready to hear than we to pray; and to grant more than we either deſire or deſerve. So that there is no Occaſion of either Dunning, or long Arguments with him. And therefore all this Prolixity, and many Words in Prayer is unſuitable to thoſe reverent Thoughts and Apprehenſions we ſhould have of Almighty God.

(2.) Few Words in Prayer doth likewiſe ſuit better with our own Weakneſs and Infirmities. Not many know what to ſay to God, he is ſo infinitely above our weak Apprehenſions. (*a*) *He is in Heaven and we upon Earth, therefore let our Words be few.* The Memories too of the greater Part of Mankind are but weak, and therefore ſhort Prayers for them are beſt. And above all, our Affections are ſo wandering that we can't eaſily fix them long on ſo glorious an Object. And ſuch is the Nature of Speech, that as it tires and flags the Spirit, ſo it diſſipates a Spirit of Devotion, which as it is fed by Meditation, ſo it is ſpent by many Words and Talking.

(3.) Brevity in Words gives us a truer Notion of the Nature of Devotion. For Prayer is the Language of the Heart to God; and great Care is to be taken that it be not turned to *A drawing near to God with the Lips, while the Heart is far from him*; that is, to an outward Formality, in-

(*a*) Eccl. v. 2.

ſtead

ſtead of an inward Devotion. For avoiding of which ſome have recommended in our ſecret Devotions the Abſtaining from Words altogether, and the Betaking our ſelves to mental Prayer. And indeed the Uſe of Words in ſecret Prayer can't be to expreſs our Minds to God, who underſtands the Language of our Hearts; but only to affect ourſelves, and to kindle our Devotion to a greater Height; which Aim it miſſes of, when it runs out in too great a Length of Words.

IV. The fourth general Obervation I would make, and which our Saviour ſeems to deduce from the Doctrine he had formerly laid down, relates chiefly to the avoiding too great a Minuteneſs or Particularizing in Prayer, as a Thing not ſo proper for us, who ſhould come to God like Children to a Father, expoſing in general our Nakedneſs and Wants, but leaving it to him to ſupply them in ſuch Manner as he thinks moſt convenient for us. This ſeems to be very fairly deducible from the foregoing Words, applied to this Prayer with a *Therefore*. The foregoing Words were, *Your Father knoweth what Things ye have need of before ye ask him*; then follows, *After this Manner therefore pray ye*. And the Prayer we find conſiſts all of general Petitions, leaving the particulars to God himſelf to beſtow, as he in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs ſhould think fit. In the *firſt* Petition we pray that his Glory may be advanced,

which

which is the main End of all, to which all our other Ends and Deſigns ought to be ſubordinate. But we leave it to himſelf to contrive the infinite Ways and Means how to promote his own Glory. Only in the *ſecond* Petition we pray for the Advancement of his Kingdom, that is, the Propagation and flouriſhing State of the Goſpel; That being the chief Means whereby his Glory is to be promoted; leaving ſtill the particular Ways and Means how This is to be carried on to himſelf. In the *third* Petition we pray that he may be obeyed, and his Bleſſed Will better complyed with here upon Earth, in imitation of the cheerful Service, that is performed to him in Heaven. But as to the innumerable Particulars of this Petition, and the infinite Ways and Means how it is to be effected, we leave all That to himſelf. In the *fourth* Petition inſtead of preſcribing to God what Portion of worldly good Things we would have him to beſtow upon us, all is ſummed up in a Petition for our daily Bread. Then for our Souls, all our Petitions are comprehended in theſe two; the Pardon of Sin, and the Guarding us from being overcome with Temptation; leaving all the numberleſs Particulars of theſe Things to God himſelf; how, and when, and how much he thinks fit to beſtow. This is a Thing we ought to learn, either not to enlarge upon Particulars of Things not abſolutely neceſſary, or at leaſt to ſubmit them to God's wiſer Choice, whether, and when,

and

and how, and in what Meaſure he thinks fit to grant them.

V. A fifth general Obſervation we may make from this Prayer, is, concerning the right Preparations and Diſpoſitions with which we ought to draw near to God. And of theſe we may eaſily obſerve a great many noble ones pointed at in this very Prayer. I ſhall inſtance in the following Graces. Faith; the Love of God; the Love of our Neighbour; Humility and Reſignation; Watchfulneſs againſt Temptations, and a Readineſs to join Obedience with Prayer; All, noble Diſpoſitions for the Duty.

1. I begin with Faith, which is a fundamental Grace, neceſſary in all our Addreſſes to God, as the Apoſtle ſays. (*a*) *He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Now this Diſpoſition of Faith appears in the very firſt Words of this Prayer, *Our Father.* As Children come to a Father, believing him both ready and willing to relieve them, and with an implicit Faith in his Goodneſs, leaving it to himſelf to ſupply them in what Manner he thinks moſt fit and expedient; ſo ſhould we go to God, with an holy Confidence preſenting our Requeſts; but withal leaving it en-

(*a*) Heb. xi. 6.

tirely

tirely with him in what Manner he will be pleaſed to relieve us.

2. Another good Diſpoſition with which we are to addreſs ourſelves to Prayer, is the Love of God; and this is very viſible in this Prayer, both in that we are ſuppoſed to come to God as Children to a Father; and in that we pray in the firſt and chief Place for the Advancement of his Honour and Glory; and what we pray for ourſelves is only to fit us the better for his Service and Obedience.

3. A third good Diſpoſition for Prayer, and very obſervable here, is Charity, or the Love of our Neighbour. For all the good Things which we pray for ourſelves, we pray likewiſe for our Neighbour. We ſay, *Our Father*, not my Father; we pray for his daily Bread, and for the Pardon of his Sins, and that he may avoid the Snares of Temptation, as well as we pray for theſe Bleſſings to ourſelves. Nay, which is very remarkable, we pray for the Pardon of our own Sin, only upon Condition, and with ſuch Limitation, as we forgive them that have injured us. So that we put their Souls and ours in the ſame Bottom, and even in our ſecreteſt Prayers exerciſe that great Law of Charity of loving our Neighbour as our ſelves.

4. A fourth good Diſpoſition for Prayer, and very obſervable in this Form of our Saviour's is Humility and Reſignation. The whole of it ſavours

of

of this Grace. By coming in the Quality of Children, we acknowledge our own Ignorance and Want of Diſcretion to carve for ourſelves, and ſubmit ourſelves to the wiſer Will of our Father. By confeſſing him to be in Heaven and ourſelves upon Earth, we own our own Infirmities and his Perfections, and ſo do implicitly ſubmit all our imperfect Deſires to his allſufficient Wiſdom and Goodneſs. By preferring the Petitions for his Glory before thoſe which are for ourſelves, we ſhew that it is our Meaning and Deſire that all theſe ſhould be regulated by thoſe. By ſaying, *Thy will be done*, we ſubmit all our Deſires to his. By praying for but a bare Competency of worldly Bleſſings, we ſhew that we are far from deſiring great Things for ourſelves. By begging Forgiveneſs of our Sins, we ſhew that we are far from pleading Merit, but that in all Humility we implore Mercy. And laſtly, by praying againſt Temptations we acknowledge our own Inſufficiency to take the Conduct and Management of ourſelves, and that we are undone without the continual Aſſiſtance of the Grace of God.

5. A fifth good Diſpoſition for Prayer, or at leaſt Concomitant of it, is a Watchfulneſs againſt Temptations. Our Saviour joined theſe two together, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into Temptation.* And the bare Praying for Pardon of Sin, without great Vigilance and Care to guard againſt it for the future is but a Mocking of God, and a Deceiving

Deceiving of our own Souls. The making of this then one Part of the Prayer, *Not to lead us into Temptation, but to deliver us from Evil*; ſhews us how we ought to have an Heart well fortified againſt all manner of Temptations, and ready to do our utmoſt Endeavour to ſhake off all evil Habits. For that Circle of confeſſing our Sins, and begging God's Pardon for them, and committing them quickly again is a great Sign of Unſincerity, and muſt needs put a Stop to the Pardon we ſue out at the ſame Time.

6. I obſerve this Prayer is ſo framed that all along it ſuppoſes an Heart ready to yield Obedience to God's Commandments. By addreſſing to God as *Our Father which is in Heaven*, we own his Authority to command, and our Duty to obey. By praying that his Name may be hallowed, that is, that he may be duly honoured, we ſhew and profeſs ourſelves diſpoſed to pay him all Honour, which can't be done but by paying a Reſpect to his holy Laws. By praying for the Advancement of his Kingdom, we own ourſelves his faithful and obedient Subjects. By praying that *his Will may be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, we pray for Grace to enable us cheerfully and readily to execute all his Precepts. By begging of him our daily Bread, we both ſhew our Dependance on his Providence, and that we are reſolved to endeavour after a Livelihood in an honeſt and lawful Way, ſuch as we may look up to him for his

his Bleſſing upon it. By praying for the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, we profeſs ourſelves to repent of them in good earneſt: And when we add, *As we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*, we ſhew our actual Compliance with one of the difficulteſt Duties, *the Love of Enemies*. And when we pray *Not to be led into Temptation, but to be delivered from Evil*, we deprecate all thoſe Things, which may lead us aſide from our Duty.

VI. Laſtly, there is but one general Obſervation more I ſhall make from this Prayer; namely, that it is both to be a Form and Model, upon which to frame all our other Prayers; and likewiſe as a Prayer itſelf. This I gather both from the two Accounts St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* have given us of this Prayer, and from the Practice of the Church. St. *Matthew* ſays here, *After this Manner therefore pray ye*, intimating that our Saviour brought in this Form as a Model to ſhew us how we were to avoid ſeveral Errors in the Prayers both of the *Jews* and *Heathen*; and what good Rules we ſhould obſerve in our Devotions, the chief of which I have already mentioned. Then St. *Luke* gives us an Account, *Luk.* xi. 2. how in anſwer of ſome of his Diſciples Deſire that he would teach them to pray, as *John* taught his Diſciples; he taught them this Prayer, ſaying, *when ye pray ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

Theſe

These are the Observations I made from this excellent Prayer in general. I need not tell you how useful they would be in our Life and Conversation, if we would duly form our Devotion and our Practice by these Rules.

For by taking help from this, and some other well composed Forms, we should both shew more Reverence to God, and keep ourselves from several Indiscretions, which the trusting to an extemporary Way occasions.

And by contracting the Length of our Words, and employing that Zeal in the Intenseness of Affections, we should make our Prayers more hearty, and should find greater Life and Warmth in them.

And by contenting ourselves modestly with a general exposing of our Wants, without setting our Hearts too much on any one particular Manner of supplying them, and especially without prescribing it to God Almighty, we should both better consult his Honour, and much more surely obtain what we want.

And if we draw near to God with those right Preparations and Dispositions of Faith, and Love and Charity, of Resignation, Watchfulness and Resolution of Obedience, Devotion would be a great Pleasure; and we should be sure of many gracious Returns of our Prayers, which now for Want of those good Dispositions we go without.

And laſtly, if we formed our Devotions by this Model, we ſhould have God's Glory continually in our Eye, before the Thought of any Thing for ourſelves; we ſhould be as glad of our Neighbour's Benefit as of our own; and we ſhould have the Satisfaction in this difficult Part of Religion to follow the beſt Guide, and to ſteer by the Direction of ſo ſkilful a Pilot, till we arrived at the bleſſed End of our Voyage, and the Salvation of our Souls, by the Merits and Mediation of the ſame *Jeſus Chriſt*; who when we pray taught us, how we ſhould addreſs ourſelves to God.

Now to him with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON II.

MAT. VI. 9.

— Our Father which art in Heaven.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

HAVING at the laſt Occaſion diſcourſed to you of ſome general Obſervations from the Lord's-Prayer; I come now to conſider it more particularly in the ſeveral Parts of it. In the Prayer we have theſe three Things.

I. The Invocation; *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

II. The Petitions, being Six in Number, of which the three firſt relate to God; and the three laſt to ourſelves.

III. The Concluſion, or Doxology, intimating the Reaſon why we beg theſe Things of God.

I begin with the Invocation. *Our Father which art in Heaven.* In which we may obſerve theſe three Things; which I ſhall endeavour firſt to explain, and then to draw ſome practical Inferences from them.

1. In this Invocation we may obſerve that God is the ſole Object of divine Worſhip.

2. We may obſerve under what Notion God would have us to addreſs ourſelves to him, namely, under the Notion of *An heavenly Father.*

3. We may obſerve that in our Prayers we are not to content ourſelves with particular Regards; but ought to extend the Charity of our Prayers to all Mankind; ſaying, *Our Father*, &c.

I. The firſt Thing I obſerve in this Invocation is that God is the ſole Object of divine Worſhip: For that it is he who is meant by theſe Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, there is no Manner of doubt. But it may be objected that though this Prayer is addreſſed to God, yet there is no direct Prohibition here, of our addreſſing our Prayers

ers to Saints and Angels, or the Virgin *Mary*, as is done in the Church of *Rome*. I anſwer, that this being a Form or Model of Prayer, preſcribed for our Uſe and Imitation, with this expreſs Precept, *After this Manner therefore pray ye*; we are to take theſe firſt Words, as a Direction to whom our Prayers are to be addreſſed: Eſpecially if we conſider the Context, in which we are required *To pray to our Father in Secret*. For granting that it was not the principal Deſign of the Prayer to teach this; the principal Deſign of it, as I ſuppoſe, being to guard againſt Prolixity, Superfluity, and Oſtentation, the Vices of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* as appears by the Context; yet it ſeems plain enough that our Saviour undertook here to teach his Diſciples a right Model of Prayer, which he would have failed in, if he had not directed to whom our Prayers are to be addreſſed. It is certain, if we addreſs our Prayers to any other than to him, we do it without the leaſt Warrant from the Word of God, and without any Colour or Shadow of Reaſon. But this is taught more expreſly in many other Paſſages of Holy Scripture: That which our Saviour quoted to the Devil, when he tempted him to fall down and worſhip him, *Mat.* iv. 10. may be ſufficient to mention at this time. *It is written*, ſays he, *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*. The Sin of Idolatry here guarded againſt was formerly a very reigning Sin in the World; and the Devil deluded Men by his

doubtful Reſponſes, which he gave from his pretended Oracles in ſeveral Places; but God be thanked theſe are all ſilenced, wherever the Goſpel of our Saviour *Chriſt* is preached. There were two great Evils conſequent upon this Practice. One was the Diſhonour done thereby to Almighty God; and the other the Unprofitableneſs of all theſe Devotions to Men; for as they forſook God the Fountain of living Waters, (*a*) *They hewed out to themſelves Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns that could hold no Water.* But though the heatheniſh Idolatry is ſuppreſſed by the Goſpel; it is to be feared it is brought in again at the back Door, by the Worſhip of Saints and Angels practiced in the Church of *Rome.* For though their learned Men diſtinguiſh between the higheſt Degree of Worſhip, which they acknowledge to be due only to God, and the inferiour Degrees, which they pay to Saints and Angels, yet there is ſo great a Reſemblance both in Words and Geſtures between the one and the other, that the common People can't diſtinguiſh them. And if they could, do they think That will excuſe them from the Sin of Idolatry, that the Worſhip they pay the Saints is not the higheſt ſort of Worſhip? If this would do, the Heathens might have been excuſed upon the ſame Account, for all the Worſhip they payed to the inferiour

(*a*) Jer. ii. 13.

Deities

Deities; for they acknowledged but one Supreme, though they payed divine Honours to many inferiour Deities. And it is plain from the Writings of *Origen* and *Arnobius*, that the Heathens defended their worſhipping of many Gods by this very Argument, by which the Papiſts defend their worſhip of Saints and Angels. The Scripture has taken ſo much Care to guard us againſt Idolatry, that it has not only confined us to worſhip one God, but to addreſs him *by one Mediator Jeſus Chriſt*, on purpoſe, as it were, to cut off all Application to Saints or Angels. But I leave this, and go on to

II. The ſecond Thing I obſerved from the Words, under what Notion we are to addreſs ourſelves to God, namely, under the Notion of *our Father which is in Heaven.* There are many Compellations of God in the holy Scriptures, and many Notions under which he is repreſented to us, ſometimes as a King and Lord, ſometimes as a Judge, ſometimes as a Rewarder of the Good, ſometimes as a Revenger of Wickedneſs; but it is very remarkable here, that God is repreſented to us under that Notion, which is apteſt to invite and encourage our Addreſſes to him, and to feed our Love of him, and our Truſt and Affiance in him. But before I ſpeak of the Uſe we are to make of this Obſervation, I muſt firſt briefly explain in

what Senſe God is *our Father*, and *our Father in Heaven.*

1, Firſt then, God is our Father as he is our Creator, or the Author of our Being; and in this reſpect he is the Father of all Things, for as St. *Paul* ſaith, *Acts* xiv. 15. *He made Heaven, and Earth, and the Sea, and all Things that are therein.* And *We are God's Offſpring*, Acts. xvii. 28.

2. God is our Father, as ſuſtaining and preſerving us; in which Senſe *Job* ſaid of himſelf, that (*a*) *He was a Father to the Poor and Fatherleſs*, becauſe he relieved and protected them. Thus it is ſaid of God, that *The Eyes of all wait upon him, and that he giveth them their Meat in due Seaſon; that he opens his Hand, and ſatisfies the Deſire of every living Thing*, Pſal. cxlv. 15, 16.

3. God is our Father, as he is the King and Governour of the World; this being a Title which was commonly given to good Kings and Emperors, they were called *Fathers of their Country.* And on this Account, *Pater Omnipotens, the Almighty Father*, is a Title that the wiſeſt of the *Pagans* gave to the ſupreme God.

4. But more eſpecially, God's own People, in a more particular manner dedicated to him may claim this Relation. Of the *Jews* of old it was ſaid, (*b*) *Iſrael is my Son, even my Firſt-born.* And

(*a*) Job xxix. 16. (*b*) Exod. xxiv. 22.

Chriſtians

Chriſtians are often put in mind of this Relation; *Thou art no more a Servant, but a Son*, ſays St. *Paul*, Gal. iv. 7. *and if a Son, then an Heir of God through Chriſt. I aſcend*, ſays our Saviour, *unto my Father, and to your Father*, John xx. 17. The cordial embracing of the Chriſtian Religion, entitles us to a State of Sonſhip: *As many as received him*, ſays St. *John*, John i. 12. *to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God*; where the *Greek* Word, which we tranſlate *Power*, ἐξουσία, ſignifies likewiſe Privilege or Authority. And *Behold*, ſays the ſame St. *John*, 1 John iii. 1. *What manner of Love the Father hath given us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.* Further, the Renovation of our Mind by the Grace of God's Holy Spirit, is called Regeneration, or new Birth: (*a*) *Except a Man be born again*, (or rather *from above*, as it is in the Margin of our Bibles) *he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

In all theſe Reſpects God is *our Father*, and we his Children. Let us next ſee how he is *our Father which is in Heaven.* This, I ſuppoſe, is added to diſtinguiſh him from our earthly Parents, who, tho' they may have the natural Affections which Parents have for Children, have it ſo mixed with other Infirmities of their own, and are often ſo ſtinted and limited in their Abilities, that ſome-

(*a*) John iii. 5.

times

times they will not, often they cannot relieve the Wants of their Children, which our heavenly Father is always both able and willing to do.. This Title then of *Our Father which is in Heaven*, denotes,

1. That God is free from all that Humour, Fondneſs, and Peeviſhneſs, which often hinders earthly Parents from receiving the Addreſſes of their Children, and from relieving their Wants in a proper Manner.

2. That he is not limited by any low and depreſſed Circumſtances, but that he has full Power and Ability to relieve his Children, when they make Application to him.

3. That he never fails by Death, as our earthly Parents do.

1. As to the firſt Sort of Infirmities, proceeding from the Ignorance, Fondneſs, Humourſomneſs, and Peeviſhneſs of Parents, which prove very prejudicial, often ruinous to their Children; we are to remove all theſe from our Conceptions of God. (1.) Earthly Parents grant many Things to their Children ignorantly, not knowing, or foreſeeing what the Effect of theſe Grants will be, till by dear bought Experience they find out the Evil of them, when perhaps it is too late to retract. (2.) Earthly Parents, out of mere Fondneſs to their Children, are often blinded, and grant them Things, which if they themſelves were to be Judges, they would condemn in other Parents. (3.) Earthly Parents,

Parents, out of mere Humour, and Peeviſhneſs, or Croſsneſs, deny the reaſonable Requeſts of their Children, and diſhearten them with their unreaſonable Croſsneſs and Severity. (4.) Earthly Parents often miſtake the Natures and Tempers of their Children, and upon that account often ſpoil them, by reſtraining too much the modeſt and tractable, and by giving too looſe Reins to the pert and ſtubborn.

2. Then as to the other Sort of Infirmities, conſiſting in want of Power to relieve our Childrens Wants; it is very frequent that Childrens Addreſſes are denied, on account of the Parents low and narrow Circumſtances. But God will have our Addreſſes to him encouraged from this Conſideration, that he is not like our earthly Parents, ſtinted for want of Power to relieve us; but can do all Things whatſoever he pleaſes both in Heaven or in Earth.

Now all theſe Imperfections incident to earthly Parents, whether of Inability, or Fondneſs, or Frowardneſs, we are taught to remove by this Compellation of *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

3. Tho' our earthly Parents were ever ſo good, ever ſo wiſe, they may be taken off by Death; but we have this to conſider to our Comfort of our heavenly Father, that *he lives for ever.* As the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Pſal.* xxvii. 10. *When my Father and my Mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

III. The

III. The third Thing I obſerved in the Words, was, that in our Prayers we are not to content ourſelves with particular Regards, but together with our Prayers for ourſelves, ought to extend the Charity of our Prayers to all Mankind. This Obſervation is grounded on theſe Words, *Our Father*, and that all the Petitions run in the plural Number, for our Neighbours, as well as ourſelves. This is one good Mark of the Divinity of this Prayer, that it ſavours not in the leaſt of that Narrowneſs of Soul, which commonly limits our Thoughts. We are apt in our Devotions to think only of ourſelves; or if we think of others, it is only ſo far as they have ſome Relation to ourſelves; our Wives, and Children, our Servants, and Friends, our Relations, and Benefactors; or at moſt, thoſe Bodies of which we are Members. But to have ſuch enlarged Thoughts as appear in this Prayer, concerning the Glory of God, the Advancement of the Goſpel, the Reformation of the World, the proſperous both ſpiritual and temporal Eſtate of all Mankind, the doing by our Neighbour in our very Prayers, as by ourſelves; here ſeems to be the Finger of God in all this.

But becauſe we pray here for others, we are not to imagine that we are therefore to forget ourſelves. The Prayer runs in ſuch a Strain, as includes others with ourſelves, and therefore we are allowed to pray for ourſelves, as well at leaſt as for

for others. Nay, further, we may ſay the ſame thing in the Caſe of Prayers, as in the Caſe of Charity: In extending our Charity, tho' we are to exclude none, yet becauſe we are ignorant of the State and Condition of the greateſt Part, and our Power of relieving is but ſmall, therefore, as we ſay, *Charity begins at Home*; ſo it is with Prayer: We are ſo great Strangers to the State and Condition of others, that we know not indeed what to ask particularly for them; and therefore our Prayers, as well as our Alms, will be extended but to a few, in ſo far as concerns their particular Wants. It is no wonder then if, as to others, we content ourſelves with general Prayers, while, as to ourſelves and Families, we enlarge a little more particularly, every one knowing beſt where his own Shoe wrings him; only we muſt take care not to forget others in our Prayers, but to extend them as generally as we can to anſwer all the Occaſions of others. And indeed it can't be denied that our Prayers, by the Largeneſs of our Charity, may be extended a great deal farther than our Alms, by reaſon of the Narrowneſs of our Circumſtances, and the Want of Opportunity. And tho' we know the particular Caſe but of a few about us, yet general Petitions may be framed, according to the excellent Model of this Prayer, ſuch as will reach every ones particular Circumſtances.

Having thus explained the Particulars of the Text, I come now to conſider what Influence they ought

ought to have on good Life and Practice. And indeed I find they have ſo great a Tendency that way, that I am perſuaded this whole Prayer was calculated with a ſpecial Eye to the teaching us our other Duties of good Life, as well as to direct us how to offer up our Requeſts to God.

I. Firſt then, from our obſerving here that God is the ſole Object of divine Worſhip, we may learn how much we are beholding to the Chriſtian Religion for recovering us out of that wild Maze of the Worſhip of ſo many Gods and Goddeſſes, ſuperiour and inferiour, aſſigned by ignorant Men their particular Stations and Spheres of acting, and often differing among themſelves in point of Juriſdiction, that it was impoſſible either to pleaſe them all, or to have our Prayers favourably received by one, without provoking another againſt them. It is true, Judaiſm was clear of this Inconveniency; but while they confined that good Doctrine within the narrow Bounds of their own little Country, how ſhould we have been the wiſer or the better? It is to the Chriſtian Religion then that we owe our being called (*a*) *To turn from theſe Vanities unto the Living God*, which is an infinite Bleſſing to put our Devotions thus in the right Channel; and therefore, as many Rivulets gathered into one,

(*a*) Acts xiv. 15.

make

make a ſtrong Stream, ſo let our Devotions, which by the old Idolatry would have been divided among many Deities, be now collected into one ſtrong Stream, directed to the one great God, the Father of Angels and Men.

II. Is God our Father, and are we to addreſs ourſelves to him under this Notion? then this ſhews us both what we are to do, and what we may expect.

Firſt, I ſay, this ſhews us what we are to do; that is, it directs us to a great many good Points of Duty, which all flow from this way of repreſenting Almighty God. I ſhall inſtance in the chief of them.

1. Firſt, this directs us to the Duties of Honour, Love, and Obedience: *A Son honoureth his Father*, ſaith God, *Mal.* i. 6. *If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour?* Now if theſe Duties are due to an earthly Father, notwithſtanding the many ill Qualities, or Infirmities, he has to abate that Eſteem which we owe him, how much more are they due, where they meet with infinite Perfection? If we intend any Meaning then, when we ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, let not our Lives give our Words the Lie, but let us put on the Character of dutiful Children, and never think we can do enough to expreſs our Gratitude to our heavenly Father.

2. The

2. The Conſideration that God is our Father, and we his Children, ſhould make us endeavour to imitate and reſemble him. It is natural for Children to reſemble their Parents in Features and Complexion; and it is natural too for them to imitate them in their Manners and Actions; as our Saviour told the *Jews*, when they ſaid *Abraham was their Father*. John viii. 39. *If ye were* Abraham's *Children, ye would do the Works of* Abraham: So if we are God's Children, we muſt do the Works of God; *Be ye therefore Followers, or Imitators of God as dear Children*, ſaith St. *Paul*, Eph. v. 1. This the holy Scripture frequently inculcates. *As he who hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of Converſation*, ſays St. *Peter*, 1 Pet. i. 15. And St. *Paul* exhorts us *to be blameleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God without Rebuke in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation*, Phil. ii. 15. *Beloved now we are the Sons of God*, ſaith St. *John*, 1 *John* iii. 2. from whence he draws this Conſequence at the next Verſe; *Every one that hath this Hope, purifieth himſelf as God is pure*. And *be ye therefore perfect, as your Father is perfect*, ſays our Saviour, *Mat.* 5. *ult.* having immediately before exhorted to the Love of Enemies from this ſame Topick, *That we may be the Children of our Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil and on the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt*. In ſhort, as it is reckoned a good Sign that Children are genuine, when they are like him

him that they call Father, ſo there is no ſurer Mark of a Child of God, than to be like him, and to imitate him in all his imitable Perfections.

3. This Conſideration that God is our Father, ſhould baniſh from us all mean carking Cares, and diffident Fears, and ſordid Shifts for gathering and keeping this World. Children who have rich and noble Parents, do not commonly trouble themſelves with any anxious Care or Sollicitude about the World, knowing that they have good Parents to provide for them. So we are often on this very Account exhorted to truſt to God's Providence, (*a*) *To be anxious for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer, and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, to make known our Requeſts to God.* (b) *To caſt our Burden upon the Lord, for that he will ſuſtain us.* (c) *Not to be anxious, ſaying what ſhall we eat, or what ſhall we drink, or wherewith ſhall we be cloathed, for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all theſe Things.* Certainly theſe covetous Deſires, and unjuſt Practices, with which the World aboundeth, and never more than at this Day, and in this our Country, are totally inconſiſtent with the Belief of God's paternal Providence, as well as highly ingrateful to his Bounty, which at this Time has bettered our Circumſtances to that Degree, that one would think we needed not flee to any baſe

(*a*) Phil. iv. 6. (*b*) Pſal. lv. 22. (*c*) Mat. vi. 31. 32.

ſhuffling knaviſh Courſes, to decline the Payment of our juſt Debts, or to put any other Tricks on our Neighbours.

4. This Conſideration that God is our Father, ſhould teach us Patience in all Afflictions. What can be more comfortable, than to know that all our Afflictions are Chaſtiſements of our heavenly Father, purely deſigned for our Good. (a) *Thou ſhalt conſider in thy Heart*, ſaith God to the *Iſraelites, that as a Man chaſteneth his Son, ſo the Lord thy God chaſteneth thee.* And (b) *We have had Fathers of our Fleſh*, ſays the Apoſtle, *which have corrected us, and we gave them Reverence, ſhall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few Days chaſtened us after their own Pleaſure, but He for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holineſs.*

5. This Conſideration that God is our Father, and we his Children, ſhould in general teach us to live up to the Dignity of ſo noble a Relation. What an indecent Thing would we reckon it, for a Prince to employ himſelf as a Scullion, in doing the Drudgery Work of the Kitchin? No leſs indecent is it for a Child of God, to wallow in the Mire of Sin. We ſhould always remember our Quality, and endeavour to behave ourſelves ſuit-

(a) Deut. viii. 5. (b) Heb. xii. 10.

ably

ably to it; as the Apoſtle ſays, *Phil.* ii. 15. *That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God, without Rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation, among whom ye ſhine as Lights in the World.*

6. This Conſideration ſhould teach us how to behave ourſelves to our Fellow Chriſtians: For as we are taught here to ſay, *Our Father*, the plain Conſequence is, that we ought *to love as Brethren.* As our Saviour taught us this Prayer, ſo he gave us a new Commandment ſuitable to it, eſtabliſhing a Friendſhip among all Chriſtians: (*a*) *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. As I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples if ye have Love one to another.*

7. Laſtly, As God is our Father in Heaven, this ſhould teach us to be heavenly minded, and to remember that all Things are under God's all-ſeeing Eye, that there is no concealing of our Faults from him, as we do ſometimes from our earthly Parents. He ſees not only into our Actions, but into our Intentions, and will treat us accordingly; and therefore there is the greateſt Obligation upon us to behave ourſelves as dutiful Children, always under their Father's Eye, and expecting to render an Account to him of all their Actions.

(*a*) John xiii. 34, 35.

Thus we ſee what an Influence this Notion of God, as our heavenly Father, would have upon all our Actions. I ſhould next have ſhewn, what *we may expect* from it; for I do not think it was more deſigned to ſtir us up to our Duty, than to encourage our Hopes in theſe our Addreſſes to our heavenly Father. I have not Time to handle this as it ought. But in a Word,

1. Here is Encouragement for us, if we have been ever ſo great (*a*) Prodigals, ſo we do but repent and amend, and return to our Father; he will receive us with all the Joy imaginable.

2. Here is Encouragement for us, if we are under ever ſo great Afflictions. God is our Father, and (b) *like as a Father pities his Children, ſo he pities them that fear him.*

3. Here is Encouragement, if we have ever ſo great and many Enemies; it is but fleeing to our heavenly Father, (*c*) who is a Refuge for the Oppreſſed, a Refuge in Time of Trouble.

4. Here is the greateſt Encouragement to all our Addreſſes to the Throne of Grace. God is our Father, and it is very natural to argue from thence, as our Saviour does, *Mat.* vii. 11. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good Things to them that ask him?*

(*a*) Luke xv. 20. (*b*) Pſal. ciii. 13. (*c*) Pſal. ix. 9.

And

And therefore let us be much in Prayer, and let us put up our Prayers with all humble Truſt, Faith, and Aſſurance, that our heavenly Father will deny us nothing, that he knows to be honourable to him, and good for us. He will give Grace, and Glory, and all good Things, through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt.

To him with the Father, &c.

SERMON III.

MAT. VI. 9.

Hallowed be thy Name.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

HAVING, at the laſt Opportunity, ſpoke of the firſt Part of the *Lord's Prayer*, the Invocation; from theſe Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*; I proceed now to the Petitions, which make the ſecond and principal Part of the Prayer; the firſt of which I have now read, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

Before I enter on the Explication of this Petition, it may not be improper to conſider a little the Order of the Petitions in general, that we may the better find out, both the Meaning and Importance of this, which is now under our Conſideration. Now if we look upon the Prayer with this View, we may eaſily obſerve that the three firſt Peti-

Petitions are drawn with an Aſpect to God's Glory, and the three laſt with an Aſpect to our own Good and Advantage: *Hallowed by thy Name*; *Thy Kingdom come*; *Thy Will be done.* And then follow the Petitions for ourſelves: *Give us*; *and forgive us*; *and lead us not.* Now that we may proceed gradually, ſomething, I think, is to be learned from this Order and Method. As

I. That nothing is to be prayed for, but what makes either for God's Glory, or our own or our Neighbour's Good.

II. That of theſe two, the Glory of God ought to be preferred.

III. That the Petitions for the Glory of God, are to regulate and limit all our other Petitions; for ourſelves or others.

I. Firſt, I obſerve from the Petitions in general, that nothing is to be prayed for, but what makes either for God's Glory, or our own or our Neighbour's Good. It is plain there is nothing elſe contained in this Prayer, which yet is given us as a Form and Model by which to frame all our other Prayers. And it is likewiſe plain, from the Nature of the Petitions, that there ought to be no other put up to Almighty God; for all other Petitions would either be ſinful in themſelves, as

begging ſomething diſhonourable to God, or prejudicial to ourſelves, or others; or at leaſt of a middle and indifferent Nature, ſuch as we can't know whether they are good or bad, but may be either, according as they are, or are not directed to thoſe good Ends and Purpoſes.

II. The ſecond Thing I obſerved from the Petitions in general, is, that where thoſe two, the Glory of God, and our own Benefit or our Neighbour's, come in Competition, the Glory of God ought to be preferred. This I gather not only from the Order of the Petitions, but chiefly from the Nature of the Thing; for as to God's Glory, and our own or our Neighbour's ſpiritual and eternal Good, they never come in Competition; as to the External Felicity indeed of ourſelves, or others, it may often interfere with God's Glory, and then there is all Reaſon it ſhould yield and give way, tho' it were to ſpoiling of Goods, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, or Death itſelf. For what better Uſe can all theſe be put to, than to be inſtrumental in procuring us eternal Life?

III. The third Thing I obſerved from the Petitions in general, is, that the Petitions for the Glory of God, are to regulate and limit all our other Petitions for ourſelves or others: So that this general Exception is to be underſtood to them all; Grant me this, or that, as far, and no farther, than

is conſiſtent with thy Glory and Honour, of which thou thyſelf art the beſt Judge. As our Saviour caſts us a Copy in that Prayer of his, (a) *Lord let this Cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Theſe Things being obſerved from the Petitions in general, I return now to the three firſt, which relate to God's Honour: Of which the firſt reſpects his Glory in general, *Hallowed be thy Name*; that is, above all, and in every thing we pray that God's Honour may be principally regarded. The ſecond reſpects the chief Means of promoting that Honour among Men, by ſetting up his Kingdom, that is, the Goſpel of his dear Son Chriſt Jeſus in the World, *Thy Kingdom come.* The third reſpects the good Succeſs of this Kingdom in ſubduing the ſinful Luſts of Men, and in making them a willing People in the Day of his Power, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Or to take them in another not much different Aſpect; the firſt Petition prays for the Knowledge, and Acknowledgment, and due Honour of God in the World, that *his holy Name may be hallowed*, that is, had in particular Veneration and Eſteem. The ſecond Petition reſpects the Advancement of the Goſpel, uſually called the Kingdom of God, or of Chriſt, or the Meſſiah, *Thy Kingdom come.* The third Petition

(a) Mat. xxvi. 39.

reſpects

reſpects the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt for ſanctifying the Hearts, and for reforming the Lives of Men, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Having thus conſidered theſe Petitions in groſs, and their Relation to one another, it will be ſo much the eaſier for us to apprehend the Meaning of this firſt Petition, which now I come to conſider more particularly, *Hallowed be thy Name.* For underſtanding which Petition aright, it will be a great Help to us to conſider what is uſually meant in the holy Scripture by *God's Name*, and what by *hallowing*, or *being hallowed.*

By God's Name in holy Scripture, is moſt commonly ſignified God himſelf: As in ſpeaking to a King, inſtead of *Thou and Thee*, we ſay *Your Majeſty*; to a Lord, *Your Lordſhip*; to a Commander in Chief, *Your Excellency.* By which yet we mean no more than that we make Application to the Perſon himſelf. So in ſpeaking to God, we ſay, *Glorify thy Name*, inſtead of *glorify thy ſelf*; *let thy Name be magnified*; *I will ſing Praiſes to thy Name*; *they ſhall hear of thy great Name*; *that all People of the Earth may know thy great Name*; *let them that love thy Name be joyful in thee*; *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren*; and a great many more of the like Nature, which ſignify the very ſame thing as if we ſhould ſay, *Glorify thyſelf, be thou magnified, I will ſing Praiſes to thee*, &c. So that here, *Hallowed be thy Name*, is no more but, *Be thou hallowed by me, and all Mankind.*

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In the next Place then, let us conſider what is to be meant by the Word *Hallowed*. This Word generally ſignifies the ſetting apart of any thing from common Uſe, and the devoting and conſecrating it to God's Service, which is the higheſt Degree of Honour any thing can be put to. And from thence, for want of better Words, we are obliged to apply it to God himſelf, as if we ſhould ſay here, *Be thou honoured by us and all Men, with the higheſt Degree of Honour, even the Honour due and peculiar to thy ſelf.*

In general then, it is the Honour and Glory of God, which, in this Petition, is prayed for, and that preferably to all other Things. But all the Difficulty is not yet voided: For what occaſion is there to pray for his Honour, which is ſo inherent in him, that it is not in the Power of any, or all the Creatures to deprive or rob him of it? For underſtanding this Matter then in a right Senſe, we are to conſider that the Honour here prayed for, can't be that intrinſick Honour which is inherent in the Nature and Eſſence of God, and is inſeparable from it; nor can it be any Addition, properly ſpeaking, to his Satisfaction, that Men pay him that Honour and Glory which is due to him; for he is infinitely exalted above the Condition of receiving any Addition to his Honour by the Eſteem of his Creatures, or of ſuffering any Diminution of it by their Neglect and Contempt. It muſt be then with an Eye to the Happineſs of Men,

Men, that this Petition is put up; and it is only by way of Condeſcenſion to our Infirmities, that God is ſaid to be honoured, when his Honour is known and ſpread, and we his Creatures ſo think, ſpeak, and act, as becomes thoſe who have a due Knowledge and Senſe of him. Tho' it is the Honour of God then, which is the Object of this Petition, yet the Subject that we regard in it, is all Mankind, praying that all Men may come to the Knowledge and Acknowledgment of God, and may honour him accordingly in their Thoughts, Words, and Actions.

This is a very comprehenſive Petition, and for our more diſtinct underſtanding of it, it may not be amiſs to enlarge a little on the Particulars reducible to it. I can't pretend to enumerate them all, but ſhall mention ſome of the chief, that ſeem to belong to it.

1. Firſt then in general; whereas we know not the particular Ways and Means which God makes uſe of for promoting his own Glory, we pray for Succeſs to all thoſe Means. Many of them are often very improbable Means to Fleſh and Blood; ſometimes the Sufferings of his Servants contribute more to his Glory, than their worldly Quiet and Proſperity; and their Patience, more than all their other moſt active Diligence. In theſe, and all other the like Caſes, wherein, through our Weakneſs or Ignorance, we might be apt to ask amiſs, by this general Petition ſet at the Top of all the other,

other, we pray that whatever Methods will tend moſt to the declaring and ſpreading of his Glory, may be followed, tho never ſo diſagreeable to our Taſte, or contrary to our carnal Reaſonings. By this Petition then ſet at the Head, we regulate, correct, and renounce, whatever may be amiſs in all our following Petitions. As if we ſhould ſay, Lord, we know not what to pray for, and therefore beg that we may be directed to pray for ſuch Things as tend to thy Honour and Glory; and if we ſhould happen to ask any thing diſagreeable thereto, we beg that either it may not be granted at all, or at leaſt only in ſo far as may conſiſt with this our firſt and chief Petition.

2. By this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name*, we pray that all Men may come to the Knowledge and Acknowledgment of him the true and living God. That Atheiſts, who acknowledge no God nor Providence, may by obſerving God's Works of Creation and Providence, and the Proofs of Divinity the holy Scriptures have acquainted us with, come to the Knowledge of a God. That Pagans, inſtead of that Multitude of Idols and falſe Gods, may become acquainted with *the true God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth*. That they who know God only in a dry ſpeculative manner, may come to ſee him in the Beauty of his Providence, and learn to behave themſelves obediently and reverently towards him in the whole Courſe of their Lives and Converſations; to honour him in their Hearts

Hearts by inward Eſteem, Love, Fear, Adoration, Prayer, and Thankſgiving, and by Faith and Hope in his Conduct and Direction; to ſpeak reverently of him, not only forbearing Blaſphemy, Curſing, Swearing, and Perjury, but defending his Providence, juſtifying his Laws, and governing their Tongue according to his Precepts. And laſtly, in our whole Life and Converſation to honour him, by doing all the good we can; (a) *That our Light may ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.* In ſhort, that all Men may be brought to the Principles and Practice of Natural Religion: For as to Chriſtianity I ſhall not ſpeak of it under this firſt Petition, becauſe I think that belongs properly to the next, *Thy Kingdom come.*

3. By this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name*, we pray that in all Things we ſet about, they may be directed to, and end in God's Glory and Honour. This will comprehend theſe Particulars:

(1.) That God may lay ſo ſtrong Reſtraints upon us by his Grace and Providence, that we never ſo much as aim at any ill Thing.

(2.) That if we do aim at it, we may be diſappointed, and not permitted to bring it to Effect.

(3.) That God would interpoſe to defeat all the

(a) Mat. v. 16.

evil

evil Works and Deſigns of Men, that their Machinations may not proſper.

(4.) That in all our good Works, our Intentions may be purely ſet on his Honour and Glory.

(5.) That in all our indifferent Actions, we endeavour ſo to ſanctify them, that they may be directed to God's Honour and Glory.

(6.) That God would be pleaſed ſo to over-rule the wickedeſt Actions of Men, that they may likewiſe turn to his Honour.

All theſe are the proper Subject of our Prayers, and do naturally belong to this firſt Petition, and therefore it will be neceſſary to explain them a little more particularly.

(1.) We pray here that God by his Grace and Providence, may lay ſo ſtrong Reſtraints upon us, that we may never ſo much as aim at any ill Thing. If we ſet his Glory before our Eyes, as the ultimate Aim and Deſign of all our Actions, we ſhall be delivered from all baſe ſiniſter Deſigns and Intentions. For tho we are free Agents, God has ſo many Ways of over-ruling or diverting our Contrivances, that it is richly worth while to apply to him for it. (a) *There are many Devices*, ſays *Solomon, in a Man's Heart, nevertheleſs the Counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.* He has infinite Ways both of Providence and Grace, to divert our Hearts

(a) Prov. xix. 21.

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from evil Deſigns, without breaking in upon the Freedom of our Wills. And as the Beginning of all good Actions, is the ſettling of the Intention aright, it is but reaſonable that this Petition to direct the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, ſhould lead the Van of the other Petitions.

(2.) We pray here, that if the Thoughts and Deſigns of any ill Things ſhould enter into our Hearts, God would diſappoint them, and not permit us to bring them to effect. Thus God dealt by *Abimelech*, after he had ſent and taken *Sarah*, God appeared to him in a Dream, and repreſented the Iniquity of the Action he was about, ſo lively to him, that he was quite diverted from it: And God told him that (*a*) *He had withheld him from ſinning againſt him, and ſuffered him not to touch her.* There is a Promiſe, *Hoſ.* ii. 6. when his People played the Harlot, and ſaid they would go after their Lovers, that *God would hedge up their Way with Thorns, and make a Wall that they ſhould not find their Paths.* This is mightily to be wiſhed, that when the Devil has thrown in a Temptation into our Hearts, God in his Providence would contrive a Diſappointment.

(3.) We pray in this Petition that when wicked Men go boldly on in any evil Work, God would interpoſe to defeat their evil Deſigns, that their

(*a*) Gen. xx. 6.

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Machinations may not proſper. And this he does two Ways, either by converting them from the Evil of their Ways; as he did by St. *Paul* in the very Journey; as he was going to execute that bloody Commiſſion which he had received, to perſecute the Chriſtians at *Damaſcus*, it pleaſed God to open his Eyes, and to convert him to the Chriſtian Faith. The other Way is by croſſing and confounding them, if they are obſtinate in an evil Courſe; and thus he ſerved *Pharoah*, who ſtood obſtinate after all the Wonders of Plagues God ſent upon him and upon his People; and delivered the *Iſraelites with an high Hand and an outſtretched Arm*; and at laſt *got himſelf Honour upon* Pharoah *and all his Hoſt*, ſo glorifying his Name, in the Deſtruction of his Enemies.

(4.) In this Petition we pray that in all our good Works, our Intention may be purely ſet to God's Service, that is, to honour and glorify him by our good Works: That no covetous, or ambitious, or vain-glorious, or any other ſiniſter Deſign mix in, to deprive us of the Comfort of having God's Honour chiefly in our Intention. It is a noble Precept of our Saviour's concerning all the Endeavours of our Life. (*a*) *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof.* And it is the very

(*a*) Mat. vi. 33.

ſame Thing he teaches here in this excellent Pattern of Devotion, that the firſt Thing in our Thoughts and Deſires ſhould be the Glory and Honour of God, which is done chiefly by ſeeking his Kingdom and the Righteouſneſs thereof, all which we pray for in the three firſt Petitions; *Hallowed be thy Name*; and *thy Kingdom come*; and *thy Will be done.* So exactly do our Saviour's Directions as to Prayers and Endeavours ſuit, and agree together.

(5.) In this Petition we pray that all our indifferent Actions by good Intention and Regulation may be ſo ordered that they may tend to promote this great End of the Glory and Honour of God. (*a*) *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* Ye may perhaps think it ſtrange that ſuch mean and indifferent Actions as theſe, nay, how all Actions whatſoever ſhould be ſo gone about as to contribute to God's Honour. But there are many Ways how this may be done; I ſhall inſtance in this ſame Action of eating and drinking, how it may be gone about ſo as to make for God's Honour. 1*ſt.* If God be thankfully regarded as the Donor, if it be conſidered that it is he who made the Earth, Seas and Rivers, and gave them this prolifick fertile

(*a*) 1. Cor. x. 31.

Virtue,

Virtue, to produce Meat and Drink for Man in great Plenty and Variety; if it be conſidered with Gratitude that he makes his Sun to ſhine, and his Rain to fall, that he attemperates the ſeveral Seaſons of Seed-time and Harveſt ſo as to fit them for the Production and Ripening the Fruits of the Ground; if it be conſidered that he by his Bleſſing on our Labours and Induſtry, furniſhes us wherewithal to purchaſe thoſe Neceſſaries, and that he gives us Health and Hearts to uſe them. 2*ly*. We go about thoſe Actions to the Glory of God when we keep within the Bounds of Temperance and Sobriety in the Uſe of thoſe Bleſſings, which are ſo apt to be abuſed. 3*ly*. We eat and drink to the Glory of God, when we deſign to employ thoſe Bodies and Lives ſo ſupported and maintained, in his Service. It were an eaſy Thing to apply this to all other innocent but indifferent Actions, and to ſhew that the Glory of God is the chief Thing we are to propoſe in them all. But I muſt not treſpaſs on your Time and Patience.

(6.) *Laſtly*, We pray in this Petition that God would be pleaſed ſo to overrule the wickedeſt Actions of Men, that they likewiſe may turn to his Honour and Glory. For as Chymiſts and Apothecaries extract and make ſome rare Medicines out of rank Poiſons, ſo God brings many a good Thing to paſs, very much for his own Honour and Glory, out of baſe ſinful Actions: Though at the ſame

time he is far from being the Author of the Sin, but hates it, and punishes the Sinner for it. What abundance of noble Events were occasioned by that unworthy Action of *Joseph*'s Brethren selling him into *Egypt*, such as the keeping the whole Family alive in the Time of Famine; the gaining Honour upon the Tyrant *Pharoah* and all the *Egyptian* Magicians; the leading the People of *Israel* to the Possession of the Land of *Canaan* thro' the Wilderness by a Course of so many Miracles, as were sufficient to confirm them in the Belief of the true God, at least those of them that were any thing well disposed; and to render the rest inexcusable? And how did God bring the greatest of Blessings out of *Judas*'s Treachery, and the *Jews* Infidelity, and *Pilate*'s Facileness in acting against his Conscience? It is our great Comfort that as the wickedest Men can go no further than God permits them, so even the wicked Things they do, it is in his Power to make them all cooperate for his own Glory, and for the Good of them that love him. They make for the Glory of his Mercy towards the Poor oppressed, who patiently bear the Cross; and they make for the Glory of his Justice in the Punishment of the wicked Oppressors.

Thus now I have explained what seems to me to be the Purport of this first Petition of the Lord's Prayer; I thought next to have said something to

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perſuade you of the Reaſonableneſs of making this the firſt and chief Requeſt; and then to have conſidered what Influence it ought to have on our Practice. But there being no great Occaſion to enlarge upon theſe, I ſhall very briefly diſpatch them.

As to the Reaſonableneſs of making this the firſt and chief Requeſt, that what makes for God's Honour ſhould be minded before any Thing that has a more immediate Relation to ourſelves; is it not highly reaſonable that he ſhould be preferred to us? If a Queſtion ſhould be ſtarted whether the Maſter or the Slave ſhould be firſt ſerved; we would think it a very unreaſonable Queſtion, and would not be long in deciding it. Beſides if we conſider our Ignorance and Raſhneſs in aſking, we ſhall ſoon be convinced that there is nothing ſafer and better for us than that there be ſo wiſe a Check and Controul upon all our Requeſts as infinite Wiſdom to direct and amend our Ignorance and Folly.

Laſtly as to the Influence this Doctrine ought to have on our Practice, there are many uſeful Leſſons it might teach us, if we would duly advert to them.

1. From hence we may learn carefully to abſtain from all Sin, as being a Thing which beſides its other Malignities, is a Contempt of God's Authority, a Preferring of our own Wills to his, a De-

ſpiſing of his Wiſdom and Judgment concerning our Duty and Happineſs, and a Setting up of our own in Competition, which is a manifeſt Diſhonour to God, and directly contrary to this firſt Petition.

2. As there are ſome Sins, which reflect more immediately upon God's Honour, ſuch as tearing his ſacred Name with horrid Oaths and Blaſphemies, calling him in to witneſs a Lie by Perjury, ridiculing his Word and Ordinances, arguing againſt his Being or Providence; all theſe I ſay being more immediately contrary to this Duty of honouring and hallowing God's Name, ſhould not only moſt carefully be avoided by ourſelves, and even all Approaches to them; but we ought in our ſeveral Stations to be animated with a particular Zeal againſt them in others.

3. From this Doctrine it will plainly follow that nothing prohibited by God ought to be uſed as a Means to promote his Honour; for this is to ſet aſide his Wiſdom, and to ſet up our own, or rather the Devil's.

4. Laſtly let this Doctrine teach us the great Duties of Self-denial, Reſignation, Cheerfulneſs and Contentment in all States and Conditions. Let us not murmur at any Diſpenſations of Providence, remembring who ſits at the Helm; and that is no leſs than infinite Wiſdom, that aſſigns

us all our ſeveral Parts, and directs all to the beſt Ends and Purpoſes.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON IV.

MAT. VI. 10.

Thy Kingdom come.—

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

THE Petitions of this excellent Prayer are ſhort, but exceeding comprehenſive. Of the three Firſt, which have a more immediate Aſpect upon God Almighty; The firſt directed us to aim at, and pray for his Honour and Glory, *Hallowed be thy Name.* This, as I take it, is put as the ultmate Deſign to which all the reſt are to refer; and they are all to be governed, and regulated, and interpreted by it: As if we ſhould ſay,

ſay, *Thy Kingdom come*, i. e. Let the Kingdom of Grace and Glory be advanced as far, and as faſt as is conſiſtent with thy Honour and Glory, by Goſpel Methods not by the Ways of Perſecution; by proper Means and Inſtruments, not by an irregular Employing of all Hands, and bringing the whole World into Confuſion by it. And ſo *Thy Will be done*, i. e. Let thy holy Laws be obeyed with ſuch a Readineſs and Cheerfulneſs upon Earth, as may reſemble the Obedience of the Angels in Heaven; but ſtill ſo far as is conſiſtent with thy Honour and Glory. For I ſuppoſe it would be inconſiſtent with God's Honour to have Men taught Obedience to his Laws, by withdrawing any of the Liberties he has allowed Mankind; as for example, if to teach them Temperance, there were an univerſal Prohibition of Fleſh and ſtrong Drink, and an Injunction to live on Bread and Herbs and Water. Or to teach them Chaſtity, they were all forced to be Eunuchs or Hermits. So *Give us this Day our daily Bread*, as far as conſiſts with thy Honour and Glory, *i. e.* In a lawful regular Way; for it would be inconſiſtent with God's Honour, to provide the good Things of this World for Men, if they ſhould agree to lay aſide all Methods of Induſtry, and fold their Hands together, expecting that Meat would drop into their Mouths; or if neglecting their own Labour and Induſtry, they ſhould pray to be ſupplyed by Cheating

Cheating or Robbing of others. And ſo *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes*, as far as conſiſts with thy Honour; but it is inconſiſtent with God's Honour to pardon the Impenitent and Incorrigible; ſuch Pardons would only encourage Men boldly to multiply Tranſgreſſions. So *Lead us not into Temptation*, as far as conſiſts with thy Honour; For there may be diſhonourable Ways of keeping Men from Temptations. *e. g.* If to guard us againſt the wandring Luſt of the Eyes, he ſhould cauſe Men to be born blind, or to keep their Tongue from lying and ſlandering, he ſhould cauſe them to be born deaf and dumb.

I give theſe few Inſtances, only to ſhew how that firſt and principal Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name*, is to govern, limit and regulate all the reſt. And this I thought was a neceſſary Precaution in the Explication of all the following Petitions of the Lord's-Prayer. So now I come to the ſecond Petition, which is that of my Text; *Thy Kingdom come.* But what a ſtrange ſort of Petition may this ſeem? As if God did not ſway the Scepter of the World, as he pleaſes; as if Satan had got the better, and we prayed that God would take the Government of the World into his own Hand. In anſwer to this we are to conſider that it is not God's Government of the World which is doubted or called in Queſtion, or prayed for;

for

for (*a*) *His Throne is in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.* The Kingdom here ſpoke of is that gracious Method of bringing Men to Glory and Happineſs by Chriſt. This in the *New Teſtament* is called the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Chriſt, and the Kingdom of Heaven. And I doubt not it is this very Kingdom, which is meant in this Petition. But was not Chriſt already come; and were not the means of Grace now made uſe of, to gain in Proſelytes to his Kingdom? All this is very true; but at the ſame time, there were all Endeavours uſed by the Devil and his Inſtruments to hinder the planting of Chriſt's Kingdom in the World; both outwardly, by obſtructing the Propagation of the Goſpel, and inwardly by hindering its taking effect in the Hearts of Men; till both which be done, the Church or Kingdom of Chriſt is but in a militant, unquiet State. And therefore we pray that Chriſt may obtain a final Victory over all his Enemies, and may bring all his Subjects to the quiet Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom of Heaven, by the Propagation of the Goſpel, and the Grace of the holy Spirit, and other favourable Providences to his Church. It is this final Settlement of Chriſt's Kingdom, *viz.* The glorious triumphant State of the Church in Heaven which we chiefly pray for in this Petition,

(*a*) Pſ. ciii. 19.

that

that it may come; and in order to that, that God would pleaſe to follow all the Means of Grace with his Bleſſing, and Succeſs.

This Petition then, though in few Words, we ſhall find to be very comprehenſive: As praying for all thoſe Things which with God's Honour may conduce to the final Salvation of Men by Jeſus Chriſt and his Goſpel. For our more diſtinct Apprehenſion of it, I ſhall mention the chief of thoſe Particulars, which are comprehended in this Petition.

I. The firſt Thing I ſhall mention as meant in this Petition is the Propagation of the Goſpel among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The Goſpel is called (*a*) *The Goſpel of the Kingdom*. And the Deſign of it is to gain in Subjects to Jeſus Chriſt. This Goſpel we pray here, that (*b*) *it may have a free Courſe*; that God would proſper it, and remove the Impediments of it. More particularly there are theſe three Things which we pray for with Relation to the Propagation of the Goſpel. (1.) That God would ſend forth faithful Labourers, able and honeſt and diligent Miniſters of the *New Teſtament*, well inſtructed in the Mind and Will of God; not perverting it by any dangerous Error, wrong Byaſs, or ſiniſter Deſign of their own.

(*a*) Mat. xxiv. 14. (*b*) 2. Theſ. iii. 1.

(2.) That

(2.) That he would diſpoſe and prepare Mens Hearts, by removing their Prejudices, mortifying their Luſts, ſubduing their Paſſions, ſettling the Unſerioufneſs and Volatileneſs of their Temper, and enclining them to give a fair Hearing and impartial Conſideration to the Word of God. (3.) That he would either reſtrain or diſappoint all Enemies that obſtruct the Goſpel, ſuch as Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, Perſecuters, and carnal worldly minded Men, who ſet themſelves to defeat and diſappoint all the Methods, whereby the Truth may take Effect: Or that he would give a Spirit of Courage and Patience to his Miniſters and Servants, that they may not be diſcouraged by any Oppoſition, but may go on ſtedfaſtly in doing their Duty, notwithſtanding all the Difficulties they meet with in their Way.

II. As in this Petition we pray for Plenty of external Means, ſo for a large Meaſure of internal Grace, that when the Word is ſowed in our Hearts, the Cares of the World and the Luſts of other Things entring in may not choak the Word, that it become unfruitful. Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* had many Things in their Education and Principles, which prompted them to an Oppoſition to the Goſpel. Particularly the *Jews* were ſo prepoſſeſſed with the Belief and Expectation of the worldly Kingdom of their *Meſſias*, that without affording a due Conſideration to our Saviour's and his Apoſtles

Apoſtles Doctrine, or examining into the intrinſick Goodneſs of it, they rejected it on that ſole Account, as bringing no worldly Wealth and Grandeur along with it. The *Gentiles* were ſo educated in the Principles of Polytheiſm, or the Worſhip of many Gods, that the Chriſtian Religion repreſented itſelf with an Air of Atheiſm to them, while it taught them to reduce all their Devotions, and confine all their religious Services to one ſupreme Deity, and to one Mediator between God and Man. Then there were ſome of the Chriſtian Doctrines ſo inconſiſtent, as they thought, with the Principles of natural Philoſophy, particularly that of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead in general, that they could not eaſily bring themſelves to the Belief of them. And beſides the Difficulty of reconciling the Doctrines to their carnal Reaſon and Principles, there were other ſtronger Prejudices to overcome from worldly Intereſt, which commonly make Men more fierce and keen in their Defence than bare Diverſity of Doctrine. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* and the whole Order of the Jewiſh Prieſthood found, if the Chriſtian Doctrine prevailed, that both their Gains and the high Eſteem they were in with the People muſt ceaſe. The Heathen Prieſts too, and all others who had any Benefit by the Service of their Temples would be naturally prone, in their own Defence as it were, to oppoſe a Doctrine, which they quickly perceived would deprive them of their

their Gain and Livelihood. Theſe Men, if they could not anſwer the Arguments for Chriſtianity, were ready to flee to the carnal Weapon to oppoſe it; as we read of *Demetrius* and the other Craftsmen at *Epheſus*, who made ſilver Shrines for *Diana*, what an Uproar they made to oppoſe Chriſtianity. In ſhort, there were ſuch inſuperable Difficulties to be overcome, before the Goſpel could take Place, and the Kings and Princes of the World were ſo jealous of it, and ſet themſelves ſo much to extirpate it, that it required a mighty Aſſiſtance of Gifts and Graces to carry it on. In this Petition we pray that all Men may receive the Truth in the Love of it; that they may not only afford it a fair Hearing, but a due Conſideration ſuitable to the great Importance of it; and then that notwithſtanding the contrary Temptations, we and others may ſincerely uſe our beſt Endeavours to live up to it, that our Duty may prevail over all our Luſts and vitious Inclinations.

III. As in this Petition we pray for the outward Means of Grace, and the inward Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, ſo we pray for the flouriſhing State of Chriſt's Church; not that it may flow in Wealth and worldly Splendour, ſo as to reſemble a worldly Kingdom in outward Glory and Power; but that it may be ſupplied with all thoſe Encouragements, which are neceſſary or requiſite for the better carrying on the Work of the Goſpel. Now this

this Branch of the Petition extends to a great many more Things than we are aware of: For whatever tends to the Furtherance of the Goſpel falls under it. I ſhall inſtance in ſome of the Particulars. (1.) Foraſmuch then as the good Education of Children and Youth has a mighty Tendency to the Furtherance of the Goſpel; (for out of them both able Preachers and judicious attentive Hearers are to be ſupplied;) we pray here that Parents, Schoolmaſters, Tutors and Guardians may diligently and dextrouſly apply themſelves to the Diſcharge of their great Truſt, in inſtilling the Principles of an early Piety into thoſe Children and Youth, who are committed to their Care; and that not only by good Precepts, but good Example, a Thing which takes with them far beyond the other. (2.) Foraſmuch as to the right Qualifying of Men to officiate in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, it is neceſſary, now Miracles are ceaſed, that they have much Time and Leiſure for the Study and Meditation of divine Things; and that they be furniſhed with good Helps of Books and other Materials for Study; and that they have their Minds diſengaged from the Diſtraction of worldly Cares, that they may apply them ſo much more intently to thoſe better Subjects, which are the peculiar Buſineſs of their Calling; in order to all theſe good Deſigns, it is to be wiſhed and prayed for, that there be a ſufficient Competency of worldly Encouragements provided for the Miniſters of the

Goſpel;

Goſpel; I ſay, a Competency not to maintain them in Eaſe and Luxury, but that they may follow their ſacred Employments without Diſtraction. Upon this Account likewiſe the Favour of Princes and ſecular Magiſtrates is to be wiſhed and prayed for, for the good of the Church, that Kings may be her nurſing Fathers, and Queens her nurſing Mothers. And for this likewiſe, as well as for other good Ends, good Princes and Magiſtrates are to be prayed for, *That we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* (3.) Foraſmuch as Peace and Quietneſs in the State, and a good Form and Adminiſtration of Civil Government has a good Influence on the Church, and the Advancement of true Religion, we are to pray for both theſe; knowing that Tyranny, Rebellion or any other Convulſion in the State doth mightily endanger not only the outward Policy and regular Frame of Religion, but likewiſe the Doctrine and Duties of it; for commonly at thoſe gaps Hereſies and Schiſms, and all manner of Immoralities break in. (4.) A good Government and Diſcipline in the Church falls under this Prayer for the coming of Chriſt's Kingdom. And therefore we are to pray here both that the Diſcipline may be well eſtabliſhed, and well executed by all Perſons in their ſeveral Stations and Callings; that the Rulers of the Church may rule with Prudence and Diligence; and the Ruled may honour and obey thoſe who are over them in the Lord and admoniſh them,

and have them in eſteem for their Work's ſake. For where there is not this mutual Harmony and Agreement between Teachers and Learners, between Governours and Governed, there is nothing but Confuſion and every evil Work.

IV. In this Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, we pray for the good Succeſs of all theſe Means of Grace, and the other Aſſiſtances of Providence abovementioned; that is, we pray that the pure and ſound Chriſtian Doctrine may be believed, and generally prevail againſt Errors and Hereſies; that God may be worſhipped with a pure Worſhip, free from Superſtition and Idolatry; that the Church may abound in Examples of true Piety and Virtue, that the true Fear of God may get the better and prevail over all our Luſts, Corruptions and evil Habits: And that Chriſt may rule and reign in our Hearts by his Grace and Holy Spirit, that we may be duly fitted and prepared for his Kingdom of Glory. It is this Kindom of Glory we are chiefly to have our Eye upon, and to pray to God that we may purſue it with our moſt earneſt Deſires and Endeavours; and that we may take all the moſt proper Methods for attaining it ourſelves, and and for gaining as many others into it as we can.

So much for the Explication of this Petition, there are ſome Inferences I have to make with relation

relation to Practice; and I ſhall quickly conclude.

1. My firſt Inference ſhall be from the Rank and Order this Petition holds in the Lord's-Prayer; it is put after that of, *Hallowed be thy Name*; and before all the reſt. Something we may gather from both Parts of this Obſervation.

(1.) Firſt, from its being put after that Petition by which we pray for the Honour and Glory of God, we may infer that we are to do nothing to the Diſhonour of God, even for ſo noble an End as the Propagation of the Goſpel, or the Advancement of God's Kingdom in the World. There is another Church indeed that thinks they are to ſtick at nothing for the Advancement of their Church, which they take to be the Kingdom of Chriſt. There are no Lies or Equivocations, or Calumnies or Murders ſo groſs, that they don't diſpenſe with for this End. They have in a ſolemn Council decreed that *Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks.* Where they have Power enough, they make no ſcruple to rob, empriſon, ſend to the Galleys, cruelly whip and ſcourge; nay, to put to Death, by burning Men for no higher Crime than the not being of their Church, or not joining in their Idolatrous Worſhip; as if we were not forbid *To do Evil that Good may come of it*; as if it were not a very great Diſhonour to God to have his Kingdom propagated by ſuch diſhonourable baſe Means; or as if indeed it were any Honour or Service to

Chriſt at all to have his Church filled with Hypocrites; for I ſuppoſe they do not think that Dragooning and Burning can make any real Converts or Believers. But we have not ſo learned Chriſt. Let us be as zealous as we can, every one in our ſeveral Stations, for the Propagation of the Goſpel; but remember ſtill that it muſt be done by goſpel Methods, the Methods of Inſtruction, Perſuaſion and good Example, and not by Falſhood and Cruelty.

(2.) From the other Part of the Obſervation concerning the Rank of this Petition, that it goes before all the other Petitions, except that one which ſets God's Glory as the ultimate end; we may infer that the Seeking the Kingdom of God by all lawful Ways and Means is an Endeavour duly ſubordinate to the Honour and Glory of God: Or that there is nothing in which we can better conſult God's Honour, than in promoting the Goſpel of his dear Son by all lawful Ways and Means. Let us then all of us ſeriouſly conſider how we may moſt effectually in our ſeveral Stations promote the Knowledge and Practice of Chriſtianity in our ſelves and others committed to our Care, and conclude with ourſelves that this is the very principal and beſt Method for promoting the Glory and Honour of God, infinitely beyond what the Heaping up Wealth, or the Aſpiring to Honour and Preferment or any other Thing upon which Men commonly beſtow their Labour can pretend to.

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The ſecond and chief Inference I would make from this Doctrine is this. If we are obliged to pray for Chriſt's overcoming all his Enemies, and for his heavenly Kingdom with all the gracious Means and Methods, whereby it is capable of being advanced; then we are obliged likewiſe to back theſe our Prayers with our moſt vigorous Endeavours in our ſeveral Stations for that End. This will open up to us a great Field of Duty, to which it will be proper to exhort you upon this Occaſion. I ſhall but name ſome of the chief Branches of this Duty.

(1.) If we can contribute no other Way towards the Propagation of the Goſpel, but by giving a good Example to the Heathen our Neighbours, and to the Heathen our Slaves; and by breeding up the young Heathen born in our Families in the Knowledge of the *Creed*, *Lord's-Prayer*, and *Ten Commandments*, and would encourage their coming to Church, that they may have an Opportunity of being better acquainted with the Spirit and Doctrine of Chriſtianity, this might be one good Means of advancing the Kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

(2.) Is it a Branch of this Petition that God would ſend forth faithful Labourers into his Harveſt? If we would help forward this Deſign by our beſt Endeavours, let us both give all due Encouragement to them by countenancing and attending their

Miniſtry, and in our ſeveral Stations contribute what we can to encourage ingenious Youth to apply themſelves to that ſacred Study.

(3.) If we would promote the Kingdom of God, inſtead of countenancing and propagating the Objections of Atheiſts, Deiſts, and other Enemies of Religion, let us make it our Buſineſs to obviate Mens Prejudices, to clear all Objections, and to remove every Thing that may obſtruct the Principles of Religion taking Place in their Hearts, and the Practice of it in their Lives and Converſations.

(4.) That we have no Hand in ſpreading of any Hereſy, that is, any Error againſt the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity; that we have a care likewiſe that for any ſmall Matter we do not make a Schiſm or Rent in the Communion of the Church; and above all that we have no Hand in any Perſecution for Religion, or any Thing elſe that may lay a ſtumbling Block in the Way of any of the Proſelytes to it. And if we ourſelves happen to be perſecuted for the Goſpel, let us reſolve with the Grace of God to honour our Profeſſion by a patient cheerful Suffering, and bearing the Croſs after our Maſter's Example.

(5.) As in this Petition we pray for the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace and Holy Spirit, let us take care to improve the Talent of Grace God has beſtowed upon us already; that being the ſureſt Way to obtain

obtain more. And let us take care to improve our Knowledge of divine Things by Conſideration and Meditation; and eſpecially that thoſe good Seeds of the Chriſtian Doctrine be not choaked with worldly Cares and the Luſts of other Things entring into our Hearts.

(6.) Beſides the inward Aſſiſtance of God's Grace, does the Church and Kingdom of God receive great Aſſiſtance from many external Helps of good Education of Youth, Countenance of Magiſtrates, Means to Miniſters that they may ſtudy without Diſtraction, good Diſcipline and Government, Order and Decency? Then let us all in our ſeveral Stations, as we have Opportunity, lend an helping Hand to theſe, or whatever other Means may fall in our Way towards the Promotion of true Piety, Peace and Virtue.

(7.) Laſtly, Is this Kingdom of Grace and Glory one of the chief Petitions we can make for God's Honour? Let us take care then to aſſign it a principal Place in our Hearts and to make it the chief Buſineſs of our Lives? Let us not look upon the Buſineſs of Religion as a Thing of ſmall or trivial Concern; but as the great Buſineſs upon which the Honour of God and the Salvation of our Souls depends; all other Things are but Trifles to this. This is that Pearl of great price, to make ſure of which we ſhould be ready to part with all, and purchaſe it.

Now God of his infinite Mercy ſhed abroad in our Hearts his Grace, that after a Life of Holineſs here, we may attain to a Life of Happineſs in the Kingdom of Heaven: through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt.

To whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON V.

MAT. VI. 10.

----Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

IN the former Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, we pray not only for the flouriſhing State of Chriſt's Church; that is, for the Propagation of the Goſpel, with the Uſe of all the Means of Grace, and other favourable Providences and Encouragements for carrying on that good Work; but likewiſe for inward Grace and Aſſiſtance, by which the outward Means may be made ſucceſsful. But becauſe no Means have a phyſical, certain, co-active, but only a moral, perſuaſive Power; ſo that all

all the common Means may ordinarily be rendred ineffectual; therefore here follows a Petition for the actual good Succeſs of the Means, in bringing us to a chearful Compliance with the Will of God: *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* In which Words there are two Things may be ſignified, and they are both ſo good, that I am loath to exclude either of them, and ſhall therefore ſpeak to them both.

Firſt then, by theſe Words, *Thy Will be done*, may be meant an Acquieſcence in God's Providence; *q. d.* Diſpoſe me and all Mankind to a cheerful Contentment with all the Events of thy Providence, if they be ever ſo contrary to our own carnal Expectations.

Secondly, By theſe Words, *Thy Will be done*, may be meant a cheerful Obedience to all God's Precepts; *q. d.* Give thy Grace to me and all others, that we may ſo readily and cheerfully obey thy Commandments, that it may in ſome meaſure reſemble the Obedience of the Angels in Heaven.

I. Firſt, by theſe Words, *Thy Will be done*, is meant an Acquieſcence in God's Providence. Now this Acquieſcence may be either General, and implicit; or Particular, and explicit.

1. It is General and implicit, when before the Events happen, and before we ſee through Matters, we quietly reſt in God's Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, and are eaſy in our own Minds, believing aſſuredly

aſſuredly that he will wiſely contrive all for the beſt. What is to be meant by this previous implicit Faith in God, may be explained and illuſtrated by the implicit Faith we have in Men, tho deſerving it infinitely leſs. Children, for example, do not trouble themſelves with the Cares of the World, what they ſhall eat, or what they ſhall drink, or wherewithal they ſhall be cloathed; but depend entirely on the Care and Providence of their Parents. Patients, tho they have no Skill of their own Diſeaſes, yet under God, acquieſce in the Skill of a good Phyſician. A Traveller, in an unknown Way and Country, tho he has no particular Skill in the Ways and Roads, yet truſting to a ſkillful Guide, is very eaſy, and goes cheerfully on in his Journey; and eſpecially at Sea, where there is no Path to direct us, we commit ourſelves entirely to the Skill of a Maſter, and are very eaſy under it. Now if Children can thus truſt their Parents, tho often poor, and not able to relieve them; and Travellers can truſt their Guides, tho there may be difficult Paſſages to paſs through, or ford, and it is not in the Power of the Guide to furniſh Bridges or other Conveniencies; and Paſſengers can truſt their Commander, tho he can't prevent Storms and other bad Accidents; what might they do if they had Almighty Fathers, unerring Guides, Pilots that the very Winds and Seas would obey? Might they not then with a much more implicit Faith ſurrender their Under-

Underſtanding, and ſubmit all their own Meaſures to his? And this is the true State of the Caſe with Almighty God.

All this may be ſaid of future Events, which are entirely in God's Hand, and we know nothing at all of them, but in general depend on God's Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs. But then there are ſome particular Events, for which we have ſomething more to depend upon, than this general, implicit, but ignorant Faith; namely, where God has by Prediction, or Promiſe, or by a Train of Providences, or by ſome other manifeſt Opening of the Scene, diſcovered ſomewhat more clearly what he is about; then as his Will and Deſign opens up more and more, we have greater Encouragement to ſtrike in with it, and to ſay, *Thy Will be done.* For tho God's Deſigns in general are dark, and the Footſteps of his Providence hard to be perceived, like that of the Way of a Ship in the Sea, which makes but a ſlender Impreſſion, and which is ſoon worn out; yet when he has long held on a ſteady Courſe, ſo that it is plain what Port he ſteers for; as his Deſigns open more and more, there is a great Beauty in them, and his Providence ſhould more explicitely be complied with. Yet there is great Danger here in being too haſty in interpreting and applying of Providences; it is much ſafer to wait till we ſee what God aims at, and in the mean time to obey the Will of his Precepts, than to venture raſhly in the Dark in a Way which

which we are not ſure he is about; and if he is, whether he deſigns it for Mercy or Judgment. So much for future Events, which are entirely in God's Hand, where *the Lot is caſt into the Lap, and the whole Diſpoſal of it is of the Lord*; but it does not yet appear unto us, what particular Way he intends to order it.

2. But then ſecondly, this Acquieſcence in God's Will may be Particular and explicite, when God in his Providence has brought his Works to paſs, and it is very plain what Settlement he aims at. It is our Duty then to admire the Beauty of Providence, and expreſly to acquieſce in it, tho' thoſe Events be ever ſo contrary to our Deſigns and Expectations, ſaying, with our Saviour, *Not my Will, but thy Will be done.* This Duty of acquieſcing contentedly in whatſoever Events God's Providence brings about, is a great and comprehenſive Duty, and has a mighty Tendency both to our own Peace and Quiet, and the Eaſe and Quiet of the World about us. But foraſmuch as this is a Duty of ſome Difficulty to apprehend it, and of yet greater Difficulty to comply with it, I ſhall ſay ſomething both to clear up the Nature, and to perſwade to the Practice of it. As to the Nature of it, we are not to believe that it is a Duty incumbent upon us actively to comply with every Thing that ſeems to be favoured by Providence; for ſometimes we are not to comply at all, but according to the Duty of our Place and Station, are by all lawful

Ways

Ways to oppoſe proſperous Iniquity; and that which ſeems a Countenance of Providence, is often no ſuch thing, but only God's making uſe of ill Men to be Scourges in his Hand for chaſtiſing others, ſometimes as bad, but often a great deal better than themſelves. We ſhall never be ſafe then in our Duty of acquieſcing in the divine Providence, except where we are ſure that we have taken no ſinful Steps to bring it about ourſelves; and where it is brought about to our Hand, it is often not an Active, but a Paſſive Compliance, which God requires at our Hands. The Thing will be clearer by an Example. When the King of *Aſſyria* invaded *Judæa*, it would have been great Treachery in any of the *Jews* to have ſided with him. Yet afterwards, when he had conquered them, and they were actually carried away Captives into *Babylon*, the Providence of God deciding the Matter ſo plainly, that they were his Subjects, they were obliged to perform the Duty of quiet and peaceable Subjects under him, and to ſay, *God's Will be done.* So in all other Caſes, tho' never ſo afflicting, we are allowed to pray to God, and to uſe all other lawful Endeavours to remove the Cauſe of our Trouble and Affliction; as *David* faſted and prayed while the Child was ſick; but as ſoon as the Child was dead, that being a clear Determination of the Caſe by God himſelf, he then applied himſelf entirely to this Duty of acquieſcing contentedly in God's Will and Pleaſure. Nay

further,

further, ſuppoſe this Declaration of God's Pleaſure ſhould be brought about by ſome wicked Inſtruments and Means; even in that Caſe, tho' we are not obliged to ſubmit to theſe wicked Inſtruments, yet, with reſpect to God, a Submiſſion and Acquieſcence is due; for tho' we deſerved ſuch a Puniſhment at the Hands of God, yet we deſerved it not at their Hands, and it was a Sin in them to inflict it. The looking upon Things with this different Aſpect, as they come from God, and as they come from Men, will put us in the right Way of our Duty on this difficult Subject. For tho' an Acquieſcence is due to God, this does not in the leaſt alter the Caſe as to Men, who being Strangers to his ſecret Will, ought to govern themſelves by the Directions of Duty, as it is preſcribed them by the Laws of God and Man.

But now this Point of Acquieſcence, being really, on many afflicting Occaſions, very difficult, I ſhall briefly offer a few Conſiderations to induce us to the Performance of it, and then proceed to the other Part of the Diviſion, the Preceptive Part of God's Will.

(1.) What greater Motive can there be to Acquieſcence, than to conſider that every thing is ſubject to God's Wiſdom and Contrivance, and that it is in the very Nature of this Duty, that we take it as from his Hand? Now ſuppoſing the Event to be never ſo afflicting, yet at the ſame time coming from God our heavenly Father, we

muſt

muſt take it for granted, that it is deſigned for our Good; as our Saviour argued, *The Cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?*

(2.) Let us conſider that all Things are good or bad, according as they are more or leſs ſubſervient to the ſanctifying of our Hearts, and the reforming of our Lives, and the fitting us for Heaven and Happineſs. Now if we conſider Afflictions with this Aſpect, we ſhall find that they have a very great Tendency to theſe noble Ends, and therefore that we ought chearfully to welcome them, and quietly to acquieſce in them.

(3.) Let us conſider that this World, not being the Place of our Reſt, but the Place of our Pilgrimage, it is not fit that we have all Things ſo convenient, and ſo to our Mind here, as to tempt us to forget our heavenly Country; and therefore whatever Accommodations we meet with, ſhould be thankfully accepted, no Man expecting the ſame Conveniencies upon the Road, as he does at his own Home.

(4.) Let us conſider the Example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who came to ſhew us the Way to Heaven. We know both what Hardſhips he met with, and with what a chearful contented Mind he bore them. And to his Example, I might add that of all the other Martyrs, nay, all the Saints and Servants of God in all Ages, who, *through much Tribulation, have entred into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

(5.) Laſtly,

(5.) Laſtly, let us conſider that it is much the eaſier, as well as the better Way, to ſubmit our Will chearfully to God's, than to fret, and murmur, and repine; for all Diſcontent encreaſes our Troubles; as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke, and awkward at bearing of it, only frets and galls himſelf more, than if he ſet himſelf quietly to undergo it.

So much for this Petition, *Thy Will be done*, taken in the firſt Senſe I mentioned, for a quiet Acquieſcence in all Events of God's Providence.

II. The ſecond Senſe in which I told you this Petition is to be underſtood, is, that it is a Prayer that we, and all others, may yield a chearful Obedience to all God's Precepts; that as he is readily obeyed in Heaven by Angels, ſo he may be readily obeyed upon Earth by us Men. In handling of this Point, I ſhall conſider theſe two Things.

1. The Subſtance of the Bleſſing prayed for, that God's Laws may be obeyed here upon Earth.

2. The high Degree of Perfection in which this Bleſſing is to be prayed for, namely, that it ſhould reſemble the Obedience in Heaven.

1. Firſt, I am to conſider the Subſtance of the Bleſſing prayed for, that God's Laws may be obeyed here upon Earth. This follows excellently after the Petition that God's Kingdom might come. For moſt of our Saviour's Hearers at this Time, tho' they ardently wiſhed for that new State of

Things, which they meant by the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, yet were under two very groſs Errors about it, which are both corrected in this Petition. One was that they thought the Moral Law would, as to the greateſt Part of it, be diſpenſed with as to the Subjects of the Meſſiah's Kingdom. For they thought of nothing but to kill and ſlay, and to invade their Neighbours Wealth and Poſſeſſions, and to gain to themſelves great Eſtates by Rapine and Conqueſt, and to live luxurious ſenſual Lives, which it is not to be imagined how they could dream of any ſuch thing, without diſannulling, or at leaſt diſpenſing with the whole ſecond Table of the Moral Law; and therefore, as he had in the other Parts of this Sermon, taught them the Neceſſity of Obedience to the Moral Law, and that in a much higher and perfecter Senſe, than ever they had been taught before from their ſtricteſt Doctors; ſo now, after he has taught them to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom, he immediately adds that they were to pray for a moſt perfect Obedience to his Precepts, ſuch as was performed by the Angels of God in Heaven. The other Error they were under as to the Meſſiah's Kingdom, was, that it was to be confined to the narrow Bounds of the Land of *Judea*; but they had no Notion of its being extended to all the other Parts of the Earth; this our Saviour likewiſe corrects by teaching them to pray that God's Laws may be obſerved

obſerved *upon Earth*, that is, all the World over, as they are in Heaven.

But now there is ſome Difficulty in accounting for this Petition, how it is diſtinct from the former: For if by the coming of God's Kingdom, be meant not only the furniſhing the outward Means, but likewiſe the inward Aſſiſtance of God's Grace and Holy Spirit. What more do we deſire in this Petition, that God's Will may be done? For the actual Obedience to his Laws, ſeems not ſo proper to beg of him any farther, than that he would be pleaſed to follow the outward Means with his Bleſſing and inward Grace; and that was begg'd before, in the Petition, *Thy Kingdom come.* For anſwer to this; tho' the inward Grace, as well as the outward Means, may be included in that Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, yet it being certain that his Hearers at that Time thought they might be good enough Subjects of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, without obeying God's Precepts, therefore it was no ſuperfluous Addition, if it was but as a neceſſary Explication of the other, to add, *Thy Will be done:* For by this Petition we pray that we may become Subjects of the right Stamp; and that by the prevailing Grace of God, we, and all Mankind, may yield Obedience to all his holy Laws.

More particularly, in the Subſtance of this Petition, we pray that all Men may be brought to the Knowledge of the Truth; and that knowing it, they may believe and profeſs it; and that profeſ-

ſing it, they may live up to their Profeſſion in all holy Practice and Obedience.

2. But becauſe there are many Degrees of Obedience, and ſome Sorts of it which our Saviour had faulted in the preceding Parts of this Chapter, as falling much ſhort of what he expected, let us conſider next the high Degree of Perfection, to which we are to pray for this Obedience: *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* Here God ſets us a Pattern of Obedience, even that of the Angels; not that ours upon Earth can ever be ſo perfect, but the nearer it approaches to it, ſo much the perfecter it will be; and therefore it is good to propoſe to ourſelves the nobleſt Patterns, ſuch as that of God, and Chriſt, and Angels, and the beſt of Saints; but ſtill above the Righteouſneſs of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees.*

More particularly by praying that our Obedience on Earth may reſemble that of the Angels in Heaven, theſe Properties of Obedience are prayed for.

(1.) That it be as perfect an Obedience as we can attain to in this Life. There is much Darkneſs in our Underſtanding, which hinders us from having a clear Perception and lively Senſe of our Duty. There is a great Corruption in our Will, which obſtructs our yielding an hearty Aſſent of Obedience to what we do know. And there is a great Impotence in our Faculties, that we can't put in Execution all that we would gladly do; for

as

as St. *Paul* ſays, *when we would do Good, Evil is preſent with us*; and we groan under a Law in our Members, which rebells againſt the Law of our Minds, and leads us captive to the Law of Sin. And beſides, there are many Things in which we want neither Knowledge of our Duty, nor Will and Power to execute it, which through Forgetfulneſs, or Inadvertency, or want of Care to keep our Minds in a good Temper, or through ſlackening of our Guard or Watch, we often neglect, and upon Account of that Negligence, fall into Sins of Omiſſion or Commiſſion; in all theſe we have Reaſon to beg of God to help us to an higher and more perfect State of Obedience. And the ſame we pray for all the reſt of Mankind.

(2.) Angelical Obedience is a willing and chearful Obedience; Angels are repreſented as indefatigable in God's Service, and always attentive to receive his Commands. *Bleſs the Lord ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkening unto the Voice of his Word.* So let our Obedience be not only an external Service, but let it proceed from an inward Principle of a fervent Love to God, and a Delight to do his Pleaſure.

(3.) Angelical Obedience, is an unanimous harmonious Obedience; there are no diſcontented Mutineers in that heavenly Hoſt, but with one Heart

(*a*) Pſal. ciii. 20.

they are all ready to execute any Piece of Service they are ſent about. What a ſad thing is it to obſerve, that even among good People in this World, there is ſo much Jarring and Diſcord, as is enough, were there nothing elſe, to imbitter all their Comforts, and to make their Lives uneaſy. Let us pray for, and endeavour after this Spirit of Love; Love to God, and Love to one another, that with one Heart, and one Mouth, we may glorify God.

The Sum of all is, we pray here that we, and all Men, may not only come to the Knowledge, Belief, and Profeſſion, but to the ſincere unanimous Practice of our Duty, in which we are to aim at higher and higher Meaſures of Perfection, in Imitation of that Angelical Obedience which is in Heaven.

So much for Explication of the Petition. There are two Inferences I ſhall make from this Doctrine, and then conclude.

Inf. 1. We may obſerve here, that beſides the coming of God's Kingdom, which includes both the outward Means, and the inward Grace belonging to the general Propagation of the Goſpel, we are taught to pray for ourſelves, and others, for ſtill larger Meaſures of Grace, till we arrive at the Perfection of Chriſtian Obedience. From hence I would infer, that there are infinite Degrees of Grace ſuited to all States and Conditions, with which we may provide ourſelves out of thoſe inexhauſtible Storehouſes in Heaven. It is a great Miſtake

Miſtake to think that God beſtows equal Meaſures of Grace upon all. I believe indeed he does enough of this kind to all, even the worſt of Men, to make them inexcuſable, that he can in no Senſe be charged with their Sins; and all Men with that Meaſure of Grace which they have, might be a great deal better than they are. But I do not in the leaſt doubt, that over and above this common Grace, which if it were rightly managed, might be a ſufficient Stock to begin that which might be afterwards improved into the greateſt Perfection of Holineſs; beſides this, I ſay, I do not doubt but that God gives larger Meaſures of Grace, eſpecially upon the good Improvement of our firſt meaner Talents, than are barely ſufficient to convert us to God. Nay, I am of Opinion from this, and ſome other Texts, which I ſhall not now inſiſt upon, that Grace may be improved to infinite Degrees, by asking, and uſing it, by Prayer and Endeavours; and that we may ſtill make nearer Approaches to this bleſſed State of perfect angelical Obedience. And therefore

2. My ſecond *Inference* ſhall be, Since our Saviour has taught us to pray for ſuch a perfect Holineſs as may reſemble that of the Angels in Heaven; that we ought not to give out upon any low Attainments, but continue our fervent Prayers, and moſt vigorous Endeavours after it. If our Saviour had not known that Prayer was a very proper Means to attain it, he would never have taught

us in this Model of Prayer, to have made one of the ſix Petitions ſo directly for it.

And if we do not join our Endeavours to our Prayers, we contradict ourſelves, and counteract what we pray for. Let us conſider that this is the great End of all, to which all our Inſtructions, Exhortations, and Admonitions tend, even your Advancement in Holineſs and Obedience; and without this, all Knowledge, all Profeſſions, nay, all Believing, and Perſuaſions, and Convictions, will avail us nothing; ſo far from it, that they will prove only ſo many Aggravations of our Judgment and Condemnation. Let me then exhort you, as ye love your own Souls, to add to your Faith Virtue; and to the ſmall Beginnings ye have made in Chriſtian Virtue, that ye continue, and advance towards that evangelical Perfection, to which our Saviour, by all his Directions both of our Prayers and Practice, aims to bring us.

Now to Him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, let us render, as is due, all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

SER-

SERMON VI.

MAT. VI. 11.

Give us this Day our daily Bread.

The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

HAVING conſidered the three firſt Petitions of the *Lord's-Prayer*, which relate chiefly to Almighty God, we proceed now to the three laſt, which relate more particularly to ourſelves and our Neighbours. The firſt of theſe is a Petition for the Neceſſaries of this Life, for which we are from time to time to depend on God, and to requeſt a Supply from him; for this is the Meaning of this Petition in my Text, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* For Explication of this Petition, there are

are theſe three Propoſitions contain'd in it, which will require a more particular Conſideration.

I. That we are allowed to pray for Neceſſaries; for this, in the Scripture Stile, is to be underſtood by *Bread.*

II. That we ought to be contented to depend on God from time to time for theſe Neceſſaries, and are not to expect to have them laid in all at once; for this we are to underſtand by the Word *daily*, or *day by day.*

III. That we are not to reſt in our own Acquiſitions or Endeavours for what we ſtand in need of, of the good Things of this Life; but are to look up to God for his Bleſſing on our lawful Endeavours, ſaying unto him, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

I. The firſt Thing I obſerve, as contained in this Petition, is, that we are allowed to pray for Neceſſaries. This is underſtood by the Word *Bread*; it is a common Metonymie in the Holy Scripture, and in our vulgar Phraſe, by *Bread*, to underſtand all the Neceſſaries of Life. When we ſay of any one, he has not *Bread*, the Meaning is, he is extreme poor. So tho' *Abraham* ſaid only, *Gen.* xviii. 5. *I will fetch a Morſel of Bread, and comfort your Hearts:* The Treat which he made them, went indeed

indeed by the Name of *a Morſel of Bread*, but we have an account of Milk, and Butter, and a Calf, that was kill'd and dreſs'd. So *Joſeph*, when he was about to treat his Brethren, *Gen.* xliii. 31. commanded his Servants *to ſet on Bread.* But tho' Bread ſignifies all Neceſſaries, it is not ſo eaſy a Matter to define how much is meant by theſe Neceſſaries; only in general we may aſſert, 1. That it is not meant thereby that we ſhould limit our Prayers, or Endeavours, to what will barely keep Body and Soul together, tho' with a great deal of Vexation and Trouble. It is certain that God doth not debar us from praying and endeavouring for a comfortable and decent Subſiſtence, that we may mind his Service without Diſtraction. Nay, further, it is certain that we are encouraged to endeavour after, not only the Supply of our own Wants, but that we may have wherewithal to ſupply the Wants of others. Now to both theſe, the decent Subſiſtence, and the helping of others, we are exhorted by St. *Paul*, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 11, 12. where he recommends a Diligence in our Calling, to that very End, *that we may walk decently toward them that are without, and may have Lack of nothing.* And *Eph.* iv. 28. the ſame Apoſtle adviſes to honeſt Labour, *that we may have to give to him that needeth.* And if theſe are recommended as Duties and Bleſſings, certainly we may pray for them. 2. This Subſiſtence is not in all Men alike, but differs according to the different Stations of Men, and according to the

the greater or leſſer Charge of Children, and other Domeſticks, and Relatives they have to provide for. For what would be a good Competency for a ſingle Perſon in a private Station, would fall much ſhort for a Man with a great Family, or in a publick Station. There is ſo great a Variety in this daily Bread, I mean in the ſeveral Competencies and Subſiſtences of Men, according to the ſeveral Stations which God approves in the World, that provided they keep within the Limits of what is not ſinful, there is great Latitude to be allowed. But that we may know what Bounds God has ſet to this Matter, I ſhall ſum it up in a few Words.

1. We are to take care that our Hearts be not principally ſet on the World, or on our worldly Subſiſtence; but we are *to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*, and all other Things as Acceſſaries; that is, with a much inferiour Degree of Care.

2. We are to uſe no unlawful, indirect, unjuſt, cheating Ways of purchaſing or gathering this Competency.

3. We are to limit our Deſires to real, not to extend them to imaginary Wants.

4. We are not to be ſtingy or penurious, in the Uſe of our Eſtates, either for our own Occaſions, or the Occaſions of thoſe who belong to us, or for the Relief of the Poor.

If we keep within thoſe Bounds, all the reſt of our worldly Wants and Occaſions, will eaſily fall under

under this Compellation of Bread or Subſiſtence.

Now this Bread, (which I have ſhewed you will comprehend a comfortable Subſiſtence) we may lawfully pray for. There is none but will grant that it is lawful to pray for Neceſſaries; all the Queſtion then, can be only as to the comfortable Subſiſtence; but there is a great deal of Reaſon why that may likewiſe be prayed for. 1. It tends to deliver the Mind more from anxious Cares and Fears, than ſtraitened Circumſtances. 2. It enlarges the Heart more in Thankſgivings to Almighty God. 3. It puts us in a Capacity to do more good in Works of Piety and Charity. 4. It helps better to carry on the publick Good, which often ſuffers egregiouſly for want of having wherewithal, and for want of a publick Spirit, which Want is occaſioned by pinching Circumſtances. If then this comfortable Subſiſtence is a thing good in itſelf, and has ſo good Tendency, both as to this Life preſent, and that which is to come, why may we not both ſeek it of God in Prayer, and by all lawful Means endeavour after it? But it may be objected perhaps, that under the Notion or Pretence of this comfortable Subſiſtence, worldly minded Men will enlarge their covetous Deſires and Endeavours, and ſtill pretend that they want whatever they have a mind to. But having already limited thoſe Deſires to real, not imaginary Wants, and ſubjected them to the Rules of Chriſtianity, we muſt exclude from this Petition all ſuperfluous

Deſires

Deſires of the Things of this World. But how then, may we not pray for *Riches*; is not that a Bleſſing of God, which may be made good Uſe of, and therefore may be wiſhed, and deſired, and prayed for? I anſwer, that Riches being not to be reckoned amongſt the Neceſſaries, but Superfluities of Life, we are not allowed, neither by this Petition of my Text, nor by any other Precept of holy Scripture, abſolutely to pray for them. And the Reaſon is, we are only allowed to pray for good Things; but Riches are to be reckoned among the Things indifferent, which are ſometimes good, ſometimes bad, and therefore muſt be wiſhed and prayed for only conditionally, in ſo far as God knows they will prove good for us.

II. So much for the firſt Thing I obſerved in the Words, that we are allowed to pray for Neceſſaries. The ſecond Thing I obſerved, was, That we ought to be content to depend on God from time to time, for theſe Neceſſaries, and are not to expect to have them laid in all at once. In my Text it is ſaid, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*; and in St. *Luke*, *Day by Day our daily Bread*; aud in the End of this Chapter, *Take no Thought for the Morrow*. In this Part of the Prayer, our Saviour guards us againſt a common Vice, or rather a common Pretext of Covetouſneſs: For granting, ſays the covetous Man in his Heart, that I am to be contented with a comfortable Subſiſtence, and not to ſeek after the Superfluities of Life, yet I hope I may

may lay in for this Subſiſtence not for one Day, or one Year, but for as long as I hope to live, nay for my Children and Relations after me; and becauſe Life is ſubject to many croſs Accidents, that there is no Fund ſecure, but that it may fail, therefore it is good to have ſeveral Strings to one's Bow, and to have much Goods in ſeveral Funds laid up for many Years, that the Mind may be at reſt from Fear of Want. And by this Means, under the Name of Neceſſaries, they allow themſelves the Liberty of extending their Cares and Projects as far as ever their Ability will reach. But to obviate this Reaſoning of the carnal Mind, our Saviour here directs us to pray only for *our daily Bread*, and that *for this Day*, or *Day by Day:* Which, tho' it doth not limit our Cares preciſely to one Day, yet forbids our anticipating the unneceſſary Cares of the future Time, and commands our conſtant Dependance on God's Providence, for the Supply of all our Wants. Now there are ſeveral good Reaſons may be aſſigned for this Doctrine, why our Saviour has thus thought fit, not to give us all our Portion at once, and to inſtruct us not to pray for it all at once, but by Piece-meal, as from time to time we want it. I ſhall aſſign two or three of the chief of them.

1. It is very much for the good of our Souls, that we ſhould have frequent Errands to the Throne of Grace; and even that our worldly Neceſſities ſhould call us thither. Men in this corrupt State

are

are ſo backward to Prayer, that it is to be feared, if all their worldly Occaſions were cut off, they would ſeldom draw near to God at all; and therefore the divine Providence has wiſely contrived that we muſt have a neceſſary Dependance on God for our very Subſiſtence. If a Man has ever ſo good Land to work upon, unleſs God ſends ſeaſonable Weather he can make no Crop. If a Man is ever ſo ſkilful a Tradeſman, except it pleaſe God to give him Health and the Uſe of his Limbs, and to preſerve him in his right Senſes, what will all his Skill ſignify? Every Year produces the Year's Supply; and God has contrived it ſo, that the World ſhall not have much before-hand for many Years. Beſides the Labour of Man, there muſt in every thing be a Concurrence of favourable Providences, and other Circumſtances, to make their Labours effectual. Now is not all this highly reaſonable, that we ſhould have many Monitors to put us in mind of our great and eternal Concerns, which we are ſo apt to forget? And that our worldly Affairs, to which we are too much addicted, ſhould be ſo contrived, as to convince us of their own Vanity, and of the Neceſſity of minding better Things? (*a*) *When he ſlew them*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *then they ſought him, and returned, and enquired early after God.* We may ſay the ſame of

(*a*) Pſal. lxxviii. 34.

all

all worldly Wants, when we are ſick, when we are in Want, when a Mortality comes among our Children, or Servants, or Cattle; when an Enemy lies hard upon us; when we are in any Straits and Difficulties, then we are ſenſible of our own Weakneſs, and flee to God. And Providence has likewiſe contrived that theſe our Wants ſhall be continual; every Day wants its daily Bread; Neceſſities in great Numbers are continually preſſing upon us, and would ſoon confound our Skill and Abilities, if God did not continually relieve us. And the Tendency of all this is, to make us often look up to God for Supplies; whereas if we had our Portion of Goods at once, we ſhould be apt, with the Prodigal, both to ſquander it away in riotous Living, and to withdraw our Duty and Dependance from our heavenly Father.

2. Another Reaſon for this Dependance is, that we may not oppreſs ourſelves with an unneceſſary Load of Cares and Troubles about the World. One of our Saviour's Reaſons againſt Anxiety and troubling ourſelves with anticipating the Cares of the future, is that *ſufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* Every Time brings its own Cares and Troubles along with it; and therefore contenting ourſelves with what the preſent requires, let us put off the Cares of future uncertain Times, till thoſe Times come. God has wiſely proportioned our Work and Burden to our Strength; but if we will overload ourſelves, and do the Work of two

or three Days in one, and burden ourſelves not only with the Cares of the preſent, but with the Cares of Futurity, the Conſequence of it will be, that we ſhall oppreſs ourſelves with a Burden much too heavy for our Spirits, and ſhall beſtow our Labour in vain, in ſtriving to foreſee and prevent what by all our Providence and Forecaſt, we ſhall never be able ſo much as to conjecture. Now every thing that employs the Thoughts, and diverts the Mind from its chief Buſineſs, is ſo far pernicious, and proves an Impediment, inſtead of a Furtherance of our Voyage to Heaven. If a Maſter of a Ship ſhould lay in three Years, inſtead of three Months Proviſion for a Voyage for *England*; and conſequently inſtead of bringing in any Freight to the Owners, ſhould bring them a great deal in Debt, what Thanks do ye think might he expect at the End of his Voyage? Juſt ſo it will be with all them, who, neglecting the main Buſineſs for which they were ſent into the World, fill their Minds with impertinent Thoughts and Cares about the Proviſions, more than they are allowed by the great Owner, and more than ever they will have occaſion for in the Voyage.

3. A third Reaſon for limiting our Deſires and Prayers, and Endeavours after earthly Things, to this preſent time, and againſt extending them to Futurity, is the continual Preparation we ought to be in for Death and Judgment. For the natural Tendency of theſe exceſſive Cares, is to make us believe

believe that we have taken up our Reſidence here for good and all, that this is our Home and Country, and that we look for no other; whereas we are required to be always ready equipped for a March; nay, even for a March in the Night, with our Lamps lighted. So is our Saviour to be underſtood, *Luke* xii. 35. *Let your Loins be girded about, and your Lights burning, and ye yourſelves like unto Men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the Wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.*

III. The third Thing I obſerved in the Words, was, that we are not to reſt in our own Acquiſitions or Endeavours for what we ſtand in need of, of the good Things of this Life; but are to look up to God for his Bleſſing on our lawful Endeavours, ſaying unto him, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* There are two Things contained in this Obſervation, which do both of them deſerve our more ſerious Conſideration.

1. That the good Things even of this Life, are in God's Gift.

2. That God will be frequently addreſſed to for them.

1. That the good Things even of this Life, are in God's Gift; and therefore we are taught here to pray to him for them, ſaying to God, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* Now it would not be ſo ſtrange to hear, that the noble Gift of Grace is in

God's Hands, and that we muſt inceſſantly ply to him for it; but that our *daily Bread*, and the other worthleſs Things of this World, which are commonly beſtowed on wicked as well as good Men, ſhould be the Gift of God, is not ſo plain or accountable by natural Reaſon; yet the holy Scripture is poſitive in it, and our Saviour here teaching us to aſk our Bread of God, puts the Thing beyond all doubt. It it not only the Bread which God gives miraculouſly, without any human Induſtry or Labour, which is God's Gift, as he gave Manna to the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, but that Bread, to the Production whereof a great deal of human Labour does concur, that is the Gift of God. For clearing of this, we are to conſider that all theſe Things are his Creatures; it was he who made the Earth, and all Things that are therein; it is he who endowed it with Fertility, which makes it capable of all thoſe uſeful Productions; it is he who ſo adapts the Fruits of the Earth to our Bodies, that they are capable of yielding them Nouriſhment and Strength: It is he likewiſe who furniſhes us with the Dexterity and Ability of both Body and Mind, to do our Part in thoſe Productions. And as for their being beſtowed promiſcuouſly on Good and Bad, that doth not hinder them from being the Gifts of God, for he has many common Gifts of that Nature, which he thinks fit to beſtow even upon the Evil and the Unthankful, as our Saviour tells us, that *he makes his Sun to ſhine on the*

Evil

Evil and the Good, and his Rain to fall on the Juſt and the Unjuſt. But then if theſe are ſuch common Mercies that they are beſtowed promiſcuouſly upon all, what occaſion is there to beg them of God? This leads me to the ſecond Thing I took notice of in this Obſervation, namely,

2. That God will be frequently addreſſed to for theſe temporal Bleſſings: We are to beg them of God, and we are to beg them as a Gift or Boon, not as a Thing that is our Due, of which we demand Payment, but as a Bounty, and therefore we ſay, *Give us.* I ſhall ſpeak to both theſe, why they are to be prayed for at all, and why as a Boon.

(1.) Why we are at all to addreſs ourſelves to God for theſe Things by Prayer and Thankſgiving. I anſwer, that it is neceſſary on many Accounts. This diſtinguiſhes us from the brute Creatures, who, tho they partake of God's Bounty in feeding them, yet do not acknowledge God in it; for it is but in a Figure that the *young Lions, when they roar after their Prey, are ſaid to ſeek their Meat from God*; and that other brute Creatures are ſaid to wait on God, that he may give them their Meat in due Seaſon. This likewiſe diſtinguiſhes us from wicked Men, who ſacrifice to their own Net, and impute all their Wealth to their own Pains and Induſtry, according to the Deſcription we have of them, *Deut.* viii. 17. ſaying, *My Power, and the Might of my Hand, hath gotten me this Wealth:*

Whereas good Men *remember the Lord their God, for it is he that giveth them Power to get Wealth,* as it there follows. There is nothing then more rational, than for good Men, who believe a Providence, and that God is the Author of every good Gift, to addreſs to him, and to own him as the Giver of all the Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of Life, in Prayers and Thankſgivings.

(2.) But then as we are thus to addreſs ourſelves to God for our daily Bread, we are to addreſs ourſelves for it humbly, as for a free Gift, not a Debt; and therefore our Addreſſes muſt be with all Humility, yet they may nevertheleſs be with an holy Confidence, as that of Children is, when they come to ask Neceſſaries of a Father; for this paternal Affection is not ſo great in any earthly Parent, as it is in God: *Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have Compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, ſaith the Lord,* Iſa. xlix. 15. And (a) *if ye being Evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good Things to them that ask him?* ſays our Saviour hereafter in this ſame Sermon.

As theſe Addreſſes to God are to be with Humility and Confidence, ſo they ought to be very frequent, and conſequently with an holy Importunity.

(a) Mat. vii. 11.

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The Neceſſaries of Life underſtood here by Bread, are ſo many, and our Wants of them recur ſo frequently, that this alone neceſſarily engages us in the frequent Practice and Exerciſe of Prayer. And beſides, the Words, *this Day*, ſhew us that this Petition is deſigned to be renewed *every Day*; and therefore we ſhould keep ourſelves in a conſtant good Diſpoſition for drawing near to God.

I have now done with the Explication of the Text; I ſhall be very ſhort in the Application of it.

1. Firſt then, this Text ſhews us by the Word, *daily Bread*, how we ought to content ourſelves with the Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of Life; and how we ſhould retrench the Superfluities of it. I might here run into a copious Reproof of Luxury; and recommend the Virtues of Temperance, Sobriety, and Frugality, as being moſt ſuitable to this Part of our Saviour's Prayer. Particularly I might run out againſt that beaſtly Vice of Drunkenneſs; I call it beaſtly, not that I know any Beaſts that are guilty of it, but becauſe it makes Men more brutiſh in their Actions, than the Beaſts themſelves, that they are not capable of being governed by any Impreſſions of Reaſon, Religion, Intereſt, or even common Shame; but run on in a mad Career of drinking away their very Senſes, and all the right Notions they ever were Maſters of.

2. By our praying this Day for *our daily Bread*, I might here reprove the reigning Sin of Covetouſneſs, which is never contented, no not *with much Goods laid up for many Years.* The Moderation of this Petition, ſhould teach us to wean our Hearts from the World, and if God bleſſes us with Riches, *to be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for ourſelves a good Foundation againſt the time to come.*

3. By our being taught here to depend and wait on God for *our daily Bread*, we ſee how juſtly they ſtand condemned, who have all their Dependance on their Inheritances, Friends, Places, Callings, and their own Skill and Induſtry for their making their Fortunes in the World; but God is not in all their Thoughts, they put him out of their Schemes; they addreſs not themſelves to him for his Bleſſing, nor thankfully acknowledge his Bounty; they propoſe not to themſelves his Glory or Service by any of their Purchaſes, nor ever expect to be accountable to him for the Uſes they put their Eſtates to, but ſacrificing entirely to their own Net, are puft up in their vain Minds, and think their Wealth is their own. *Who is Lord over them?*

4. If we are thus to pray for *our daily Bread*, there is another great Duty conſequent upon that; namely, foraſmuch as we expect not that God ſhould beſtow it upon us by the way of Miracle, but by giving his Bleſſing to our own Endeavours; we muſt therefore take care to ſet about nothing towards

towards the procuring of a Livelihood, but what we may beg his Bleſſing upon it, and therefore muſt careſully abſtain from all knaviſh, diſhoneſt Courſes, ſuch as we can't look up to God, and beg his Bleſſing to them; and muſt employ ourſelves diligently in the Duties of a lawful Calling, and not expect that this Prayer for *our daily Bread*, will be granted, if we either betake not ourſelves to honeſt Employments, or are lazy and ſlothful in the Management of them.

5. Since we have *our daily Bread* from God, this ſhews us with what Gratitude we ought to partake of his Benefits. It is ſtrange how we can forget God, our daily and hourly Benefactor. *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſter's Crib*, Iſa. i. 3. And ſhall we be more unnatural, and more ungrateful than they?

I content myſelf to have thus briefly mentioned theſe Things in the End of a Sermon, leaving the further Improvement of them to your own Meditation, and God's Bleſſing, without which all our Labour is to no purpoſe.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, our great Supporter and bountiful Benefactor, who fills our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs, be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

SER-

SERMON VII.

MAT. VI. 12.

And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.

Sermon ſeventh on the Lord's-Prayer.

WE are now come to the fifth Petition of the Lord's-Prayer, which is the ſecond of thoſe which relate more immediately to ourſelves and our Neighbours. The firſt was *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* If any ſhould wonder why the Petition for Temporals ſhould go before the two other Petitions for Pardon of Sin, and Grace to reſiſt Temptations, which are of much greater Dignity, there are theſe two Accounts I think may be given of it.

First,

First, that the natural Life being prior in Time, though not in Dignity, to the ſpiritual Life, is provided for, and wants to be provided for in the firſt Place, and therefore it is no way improper that the Petition for it ſhould precede. Secondly, on the Account of Devotion it may be of uſe that the Petition for Temporals ſhould firſt briefly be diſpatched, that the Mind being cleared from thoſe worldly Cares, may apply itſelf ſo much more intenſly to the greater Concerns of the Soul. As Divines, when they find a Man in Sickneſs, with his Mind diſtracted, and diverted from his main Buſineſs with worldly Cares, adviſe him to put all his worldly Buſineſs aſide, and to make his Will, that ſo he may have nothing to do, but to mind his Soul and ſpiritual Concerns. So much for the Order and Method of this Petition.

But now to come to the Petition itſelf, *And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* In it I ſhall conſider theſe two Things.

I. The Bleſſings we are here taught to pray for; namely, the Pardon of Sin for ourſelves and others.

II. The Qualifications of the Perſons, who are to put up this Petition. Their charitable Affection towards others is expreſly taken Notice of, but there are other good Qualifications likewiſe very clearly implied. For it is implied here that the Perſon

Perſon putting up this Prayer is very ſenſible of his Sins, and the Demerit of them: That he believes too that God is to be prevailed with to pardon Sin: And thirdly, that it is fit to come to him in the quality of an humble Penitent confeſſing his Sins, and duly humbled for them: And fourthly, that though God is well diſpoſed to be reconciled to us in Chriſt, we are to ſue out this Pardon by inceſſant Prayer. All which will deſerve a more particular Conſideration.

I. I begin with the Bleſſing we are here taught to pray for, the Pardon of Sin: *Forgive us our Debts.* Here they are called *Debts*; and by and by at the 14*th* Verſe *Treſpaſſes*; and St. *Luke* calls them *Sins*. They are all one and the ſame Thing, *viz.* both original and actual Sin; both the Sins of our unregenerate and regenerate State. Wonder not that I reckon original Sin among our Debts; for as a Man who is Heir to his Father's Eſtate, takes upon him likewiſe the Burden of his Debts, ſo that his Father's Debts, being tranſmitted to him, become his Debts; ſo it is with original Sin; it is an heavy Debt tranſmitted to us from our Father *Adam*, which if we had not a Friend to help us out, and to diſcharge it for us, would utterly ſink and ruin us. But if we had no other Debt but this of our Fathers contracting, this original Sin, though we may be reduced to Miſery thereby, yet we ſhould be great Objects of Mercy, as we are all

all apt to pity a Gentleman who has his Eſtate ruined, not by his own, but his Father's Miſmanagement. But alas! our Caſe is not ſo good, we have followed our Fathers Steps, and have infinitely encreaſed this Debt by our own bad Conduct, to that Degree that if the Creditor will deal rigidly with us, we muſt be utterly miſerable to all intents and purpoſes; and can never of ourſelves, or out of our own Eſtates raiſe wherewithal to defray this immenſe Debt. And therefore we are repreſented here as pleading *in forma pauperis*, and applying our ſelves to God's Mercy not for a Compoſition, but a Pardon. *Forgive us our Debts.*

And indeed there is Mercy and Compaſſion enough in God to forgive this immenſe Debt, if it were not that there are inſuperable Obſtructions in the Way, that all the Skill of Mankind could never have removed. But it has pleaſed God out of his infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs to contrive a Way for it, as far beyond the reach of Man's Invention, as the Mercy itſelf is beyond the Bowels of any human Mercy. Namely, that the only Son of God ſhould aſſume our human Nature, but without Sin; and that in that Nature he ſhould merit as much by his moſt perfect, both active and paſſive Obedience, as being by him applied to his Brethren of the ſinful Race of *Adam*, ſhould atone for not only that original Tranſgreſſion of our firſt Parents, but the actual Tranſgreſſions and

Demerits

Demerits of all Mankind; to that Degree that it is put into his Hands to ſave us all upon what Terms and Conditions he himſelf thinks moſt juſt and reaſonable. And accordingly he has directed us in this Petition, upon very gracious Terms to pray for and expect Pardon of Sins, both original and actual, of Almighty God. And this leads me to the ſecond Thing I propoſed to conſider. Namely,

II. The Qualifications of the Perſons who are allowed to put up this Petition. And I need not go out of the Text to find them, being all here either clearly implied or expreſſed. For 1. If we conſider this Petition with the Context, we may eaſily diſcover *Faith in Chriſt*; for every where in the New Teſtament we find that our Priviledge to call God our Father, or to expect Forgiveneſs of Sins from him is ſolely in and thro' Chriſt. *Rom.* viii. 15. it is aſcribed to our Adoption that *We cry Abba Father*. And *Gal.* iv. 5. one of the Ends of ſending Chriſt is ſaid to be *That we might receive the Adoption of Sons*. This Liberty then of addreſſing God as his adopted Children, and the Liberty of aſking Forgiveneſs of our Sins is owing to Faith in Chriſt. 2. We are taught here to come unto God as humble Supplicants confeſſing our Sins, and begging Pardon; ſo here is the Qualification of *Repentance*. 3. We are taught here that though God is now rendred propitious to Mankind in Chriſt,

Chriſt, yet it is requiſite that we continually ſue out our Pardons by *inceſſant Prayer*. 4. We are put in mind here of the Neceſſity of Charity, particularly that higheſt kind of it, conſiſting in the forgiving our Enemies, by putting it expreſly into our Prayers. *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors,* Now it will be fit that we conſider theſe Qualifications ſomewhat more particularly.

1. Firſt then, towards the putting up this Petition for Pardon of Sin, *Faith* is neceſſary. We muſt look upon God as a reconciled Father in Chriſt, and addreſs him as *Our Father* for the Pardon of our Sins. For without Chriſt it is impoſſible to conſider him in this Capacity: He is *The beloved Son, in whom God is well pleaſed. And we are accepted in the Beloved,* Eph. i. 6. Let us not entertain ſuch a Thought then, that it is for any Thing we have deſerved, that we are allowed thus confidently to draw near to God, or to ſue out our Pardon. It is *By Chriſt that we have Acceſs by Faith,* Rom. v. 2. And Eph. iii. 12. *It is in him we have Boldneſs and Acceſs with Confidence by the Faith of him. Where is Boaſting then? it is excluded. By what Law? of Works? nay, but by the Law of Faith.* O let us admire this wonderful Way of Mercy, how we that were exterminated by wicked Works came to have Acceſs to God again in Chriſt.

2. Towards

2. Towards the putting up this Petition for Pardon of Sin, *Repentance* is as neceſſary as Faith; as by Faith we are to believe God propitious thro' Chriſt, ſo by Repentance we are to conſider our ſelves as ſinful and miſerable Creatures, and are to addreſs God as Deliquents, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes.* We are not with the proud *Phariſee* to come unto God full of *Self-conceit*, admiring ourſelves, and vilifying and depreciating others; but quite contrary, full of *Self-abaſement* are to plead guilty, and to pray for Mercy in Chriſt Jeſus. The Foundation of all our Requeſts muſt be thus laid in *Humility.*

3. *Inceſſant Prayer* is a third Qualification of him who is allowed to put up this Petition. For though God has promiſed Forgiveneſs of Sins in Chriſt, yet he will be ſought to for this. And therefore our Saviour here has inſerted it to be aſked of God as duly as our daily Bread. But ſome perhaps may wonder that Juſtification being the Pardon of our Sins, after that, there ſhould ſtill be more Occaſion for a daily renewing of this Requeſt. But in anſwer to this it is to be conſidered that there is no Man or Woman though ever ſo well ſanctified, renewed, and juſtified, who in this imperfect State is not apt to fall into Sin; not frequently great crying Sins indeed, but the Sins of daily Incurſion, which want to be wiped out by Repentance. Of theſe there are a great many both of Omiſſion and Commiſſion, which we ought carefully

carefully to obſerve, and repent of them, as particularly as we can; though after we have done our beſt this way, there will be a great many left ſtill, which have eſcaped our Obſervation; for which God's Pardon in general ought to be begged.

4. The laſt Qualification of one who puts up this Suit for Pardon of Sin is that he be in Charity with all the World; particularly that he be ready to forgive his Neighbour all the Treſpaſſes he has committed againſt him. And this is expreſſed in the Words: *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* But here there riſes a very great Doubt and Difficulty. Are we obliged to forgive all Injuries without any the leaſt Satisfaction; nay, to remit our juſt Debts without Payment, and that upon no leſs Peril than the not being admitted to that Pardon of Sin purchaſed by Chriſt? And if not theſe, what is to be underſtood by this Part of thePetition? To this Objection and Queſtion I ſhall endeavour to give a ſhort Anſwer, firſt Negatively, then Poſitively.

Negatively. 1. By this Expreſſion our Saviour did not intend to encourage the doing of Injuries to others; as it would certainly be a great Encouragement to all Manner of Injuries, if they were all to eſcape unpuniſhed: Nor did he deſign that Injuſtices ſhould be paſt by or connived at, and that innocent Perſons ſhould ſuffer. 2. Our Saviour did not deſign to interfere with the Magiſtrate's

Office, or to hinder their calling Offenders to Account, that tending very much to the Peace and Quiet of the World, and the Good of human Society.

But then Positively. 1. All private Revenge is certainly forbidden, and it is left entirely to the Magistrate's Office, to do right between Man and Man. 2. All Rancour and Malice in the Heart are forbid; and the Duty of Love and Charity enjoined, which is very consistent with the doing of right to all. 3. The Rigour of Justice, where it borders upon Cruelty, Exaction, or Severity is condemned. 4. Where there is Probability of reclaiming an Enemy by a seasonable Kindness, such as neither encourages Transgression in general, nor wrongs any third Person in particular, it is commendable to pass by a personal Injury, and to be the first in breaking off Contention; for the retaliating Injury with Injury is the Way to perpetuate Strife, and to encrease Animosities. 5. As to Debts and Injuries, where the Party offending has not Capacity or Ability to repair them, and shews no Malice in the Case, there the Christian Part is rather to forgive, than to use the Offender rigidly by corporal Punishments and Severities. It would be no hard Matter to prove these Rules and Observations from Scripture and Reason, but foreseeing there will be a further Occasion to treat of this Subject from some Words immediately following the Lord's Prayer, and designing some practical Obser-

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vations from the Text, I chooſe to be ſo much the ſhorter on the explicatory Part.

1. Firſt, from the Rank and Order which this Petition holds in this Prayer, we may conclude that it is a Petition of extraordinary great Conſequence. It is the firſt of the ſpiritual Petitions for ourſelves or our Neighbours. And indeed if we enter upon the Conſideration of the Matter of it, we may quickly be convinced of it. For what is it that ſeparates between God and us but Sin? What is the Cauſe of all our preſent both internal and external Trouble but Sin? And what is the Cauſe of all our future Fears but Sin? If that were once pardoned, what an infinite deal of Peace of Conſcience and both external and internal Tranquillity ſhould we enjoy? Then as in this Prayer we pray for others as well as ourſelves, ſaying, forgive us our Treſpaſſes, we pray for the ſame Felicities to all Mankind. And the more common and general Felicity is, it encreaſes the Felicity of every individual Perſon; as a Man if he is in ever ſo good a Humour can't be ſo merry while all are melancholy round about him, as if they were all as cheerful as himſelf. If it were not for Sin, we ſhould have Peace with God, Peace in our own Conſciences, and Peace with all the World. And O! what a ſweet World would it then be, when there would not be one jarring String in the whole Harmony of Mankind.

This then, being one of the greateſt Bleſſings, it behoves us to ſeek after it in the firſt Place, and to take all the moſt proper Methods for obtaining it. Particularly by Faith let us lay hold on that Act of Indemnity, which Chriſt has publiſhed for all Men to come in, and receive the Pardon of their Sins upon gracious eaſy Terms. Let us ſtir up ourſelves to the exerciſe of godly Sorrow for all our Sins paſt, and to ſincere and hearty Reſolutions againſt them for the time to come. And for this end let us be inceſſant Solicitors at the Throne of Grace, and be in Charity with all Men. Eſpecially, if there is any Perſon ye apprehend has injured you, do your utmoſt to forgive him, and to be reconciled to him, as ye expect Forgiveneſs at the Hands of Almighty God.

2. From the Rank and Quality which we our ſelves hold in this Petition, which is, that of poor Supplicants, we may learn what modeſt and humble Thoughts we ought to have of ourſelves and all our Performances. There are ſeveral Errors maintained in the World quite contrary to this Notion of my Text. The Papiſts maintain the proud Doctrine of *Merit*, and the yet prouder of *Supererogation*. The Quakers proudly pretend to a *ſinleſs Perfection*. Divers Hypocrites, as they cloak over their Sins to the World, ſo they hide them as much as poſſibly they can from themſelves, and perſuade themſelves they are *Righteous*; all of us are naturally full of *Self-flattery*, and take a great deal of

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Pains to keep ourſelves from a Sight and Senſe of our Sins. And what is the Conſequence of all this but to lull us aſleep with a pleaſant Dream that we are better than others; and ſo to ſtifle the Thoughts of Repentance and Amendment, and the ſtriving earneſtly with God by Prayer for Mercy and Pardon in Chriſt Jeſus? Ye remember what our Saviour ſaid of the proud *Phariſee*, and the poor *Publican*, that *The Publican went down to his Houſe juſtified rather than the other*. Let us inſtead of any of theſe proud Opinions and Practices, follow all ſuch Courſes as may bring us to a Sight and Senſe of our Sins; and may excite us earneſtly to beg for Mercy and Pardon in Chriſt Jeſus. This Doctrine ſhould ſtir us up to a daily Self-examination, Confeſſion and Prayer to God, that our Sins may be blotted out. Theſe are the proper Exerciſes of a good Chriſtian, in which there is no Danger of exceeding. Theſe will keep the Soul in a good Frame and Temper, and the more they abaſe us in our own Sight, ſo much the more will they exalt us in the Sight of God.

3. Thirdly, here is Comfort to all good People whoſe continual Grief it is that they can never entirely conquer their Luſts and Corruptions, but are daily diſcovering new Failings in themſelves; here I ſay is Comfort to all ſuch, that to our daily Failings our Saviour has preſcribed a daily Remedy; that as often as we pray for our daily Bread, we ſhould pray likewiſe for the forgiveneſs of our

Sins. It were indeed earneſtly to be wiſhed that our Victory over Sin in this World were more compleat, and that we were delivered not only from thoſe Works of the Fleſh, thoſe crying Sins which wicked Men commonly indulge themſelves in, but likewiſe from all thoſe leſſer Faults which are incident to good People in this Life. But we are to conſider that at beſt this is but an imperfect State, and that that entire Deliverance from all Manner of Sin belongs to the State of Heaven, which good People therefore earneſtly long for. All we can do while we are here is by a diligent Uſe of the Means of Grace to ſtudy as great Perfection in Holineſs as we can, and by Watchfulneſs before hand, and Self-examination afterwards, with the conſtant Uſe of Prayer, and Reſolutions, and Endeavours to keep ourſelves as clear of all Sin both of Omiſſion and Commiſſion as poſſibly we can. But yet foraſmuch as *In many Things we offend all of us*, and *if we ſay we have no Sin we deceive ourſelves, and the Truth is not in us*; our Patience muſt extend ſo far as to be eaſy and contented with our imperfect Circumſtances, and by daily Prayer and Repentance to wipe off theſe Blemiſhes, till we arrive at that bleſſed State in Heaven, where there will be no need of this Petition. But at preſent we have great Encouragement to put up this Requeſt. It is a Petition drawn by our Saviour himſelf; and he will back it with his own prevalent Mediation and Interceſſion. And God who knows our frail Nature

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and dangerous Circumſtances in this World, will pity our Weakneſs, and pardon the Sins of this imperfect State. As the Pſalmiſt deſcribes this Mercy of God excellently, Pſ. ciii. 13, 14. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him: For he knoweth our Frame, he remembreth that we are Duſt.*

4. The laſt Thing I have to do from this Text is to addreſs myſelf to thoſe rigid Exactors of Injuries, who notwithſtanding this, and divers other plain Texts of Holy Scripture, will not pardon the leaſt Tranſgreſſion in their Neighbour, though they themſelves have long Reckonings to account for to Almighty God. I have not time now to conſider the ſeveral Caſes, what ſort of Injuries are to be pardoned, and what not; perhaps, that may come in better hereafter from thoſe Words which our Saviour has ſubjoined to the Lord's-Prayer, and which have a particular Aſpect upon this Petition, *For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you; but if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.* All I ſhall ſay at preſent is in general to recommend to you a merciful forgiving Temper, and to diſſuade you from acting out of Principles of Malice or Reſentment.

And if it is ſo dangerous a Thing to proſecute Revenge where we are provoked; what muſt it be without any Provocation at all, to contrive to aggrieve our Neighbour, and to be the firſt Aggreſſors in

Injuries? I am very ſenſible that the falſe *Rules of Honour*, as they are called, are in this Point of Retaliation of Injuries directly contrary to the Laws of Jeſus Chriſt. The one makes it a noble Thing to revenge, the other a noble Thing to paſs by an Injury. But pray conſider that in the great Day of Accounts we ſhall be judged by the Laws of Chriſt and not by Mens falſe Rules of Honour. And therefore to turn the Petition of my Text into a ſhort Exhortation I ſhall give it you in the Words of St. *Luke*, *Chap.* vi. 37. and they are ſo few that I hope ye will eaſily carry them away with you; *Forgive and ye ſhall be Forgiven.*

Now God of his infinite Mercy bleſs us all with the Pardon of our Sins, and Grace to amend our Lives, that when this ſhort Life is over, we may be admitted to that State of Glory and Happineſs which we wait for in Heaven, through the Merits and Mediation of Chriſt Jeſus.

To whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

MAT. VI. 13.

And lead us not into Temptation but deliver us from Evil.

Sermon eighth on the Lord's-Prayer.

IN theſe Words we have the laſt Petition of the Lord's-Prayer, which relates to the preſerving us from being overcome by Temptations. Before I come to the Petition itſelf, it is very fit that we conſider the Connexion. The ſpiritual Petitions relating directly to ourſelves our Saviour parts into two: One, for the Pardon of Sin already paſt, Forgive us our Debts, or Treſpaſſes; the other to guard us againſt Sin for the Time to come, which is that of my Text: *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* I ſhall firſt ſay ſomething for the Explication of the Words, and then conſider the Meaning of the Petition. To

To begin with the Word *Temptation*, I ſhall not here expatiate to enquire in how many Senſes it is taken in the holy Scriptures, but reſtrain my Conſideration of it to the Temptations here meant, namely, Temptations to Sin, ſuch Suggeſtions of the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, as are apt to induce us to the Omiſſion of Duty, or the Commiſſion of Sin.

By the Word, *leading into Temptation*, as it is applied to God, muſt not be underſtood the enſnaring us in ſinful Courſes, as if he were the Author or Contriver of Sin, which is far from the Purity of his Nature; but only the permitting us to be tempted, or the withholding his Grace, whereby we might be enabled to reſiſt Temptations, and for a juſt Puniſhment of our Sins, the leaving us to ourſelves to grapple with our ſpiritual Enemies upon our own very unequal Strength.

By *delivering us from Evil*, ſome mean the delivering us from the evil One, meaning the Devil; whether as the Principal or Head of the Temptation, or as the Tormentor, to whoſe Lot we ſhall fall, if the Temptation ſucceeds. Others mean in general the Evil of Sin, that God by his Grace and Providence, would ſo fortify, defend, and extricate us, that we be not led into ſinful Courſes or Actions; or if we are, that we be quickly delivered by a thorough Repentance and Amendment. And I ſee no material Difference between theſe two Interpretations, both tending to one and the

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ſame thing, to invoke God's Help both to ſtave off Temptations by his Providence, and to fortify us againſt them, and to help us out of them by the Grace of his holy Spirit.

The Words being thus explained, towards underſtanding of the Petition contained in them, it will be neceſſary likewiſe briefly to clear up ſome Truths here preſuppoſed, upon which this Petition ſeems to be grounded, to direct us to the right Senſe of it. The Truths I mean, are theſe following.

I. That in this corrupt State, we are expoſed to manifold Temptations, which of ourſelves, or by any natural Strength of our own, we are not able to grapple with.

II. That tho' God is not the Author of Temptations, ſo as directly to bring them on, yet he exerciſes ſuch a Power over both the Tempters, and the Tempted, that by his Grace and Providence he can either ſtave off the Temptation, or ſo reſtrain and govern us, that either we ſhall not be led into it, or quickly be extricated from it.

III. That it is our Duty earneſtly to beg this Aſſiſtance of God by Prayer.

I. That in this corrupt State we are expoſed to manifold Temptations, which of ourſelves, or by any

any natural Strength of our own, we are not able to grapple with. I ſhall not need to inſiſt on this, becauſe it requires only an Inſpection into our own Hearts and Lives, to be convinced of the Truth of it; and therefore to ſpeak of the innumerable Temptations with which we are aſſaulted, would be only to engage in an endleſs Labour to no purpoſe, but to prove what no body denies. I ſhall only from this Obſervation, take notice of the vaſt Extent of this Petition, for it is a Prayer to defend us againſt all Sort of Sin, eſpecially ſuch as we are moſt expoſed to, and moſt endangered by. And this teaches us what is to be chiefly in our Eye in all our Prayers and Endeavours, namely, to guard againſt Sin, particularly thoſe Sins to which we are moſt apt to be tempted.

II. The ſecond Thing here preſuppoſed, is that tho' God is not the Author of Temptations, ſo as directly to bring them on, yet he exerciſes ſuch a Power both over the Tempters, and the Tempted, that he can either ſtave off the Temptation, or ſo reſtrain and govern us, that we ſhall either not be led into it, or be quickly extricated from it. There are two Things to be cleared from this Obſervation.

1. Firſt, That God is clear from being the Author of Temptations. This is ſo much the more neceſſary to be explained, becauſe there are ſome who, by their unwary Expreſſions, have given to God

God a direct Cauſality in ſinful Actions, and have founded their Opinion on this, and ſome other Texts of Holy Scripture. To preſerve you againſt the Poiſon of this Doctrine, let it be conſidered firſt, that the Holy Scriptures are moſt expreſs in giving us a quite other Notion of God, than that he is the Author or Approver of any ſinful Action. *Thou art not a God that hath Pleaſure in Wickedneſs; neither ſhall Evil dwell with thee*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. v. 4. And Pſal. xlv. 6, 7. *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the Scepter of thy Kingdom, is a right Scepter; thou loveſt Righteouſneſs, and hateſt Wickedneſs.* And Deut. xxxii. 4. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect; for all his Ways are Judgment; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, juſt and right is he.* The Apoſtle St. *Paul* puts this Queſtion, and rejects it with Abhorrence, *Rom.* ix. 14. *What ſhall we ſay then*, ſays he, *is there Unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid.* And St. *James* is moſt expreſs in this Point, *James* i. 13. *Let no Man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man: But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Luſt, and enticed.* And many other Paſſages of holy Scripture might be cited in Confirmation of this Doctrine. Let us conſider likewiſe that right Reaſon is moſt conſonant to Scripture in this Point. For how could it agree with the holy Nature of God, to be the Author of that which is ſo much

much abhorred by him? of that which he expreſly forbids, and threatens with eternal Damnation?

2. The ſecond Thing to be cleared from this Obſervation, is, that tho God is not the Author of Sin, yet he exerciſes ſuch a Power both over the Tempters, and the Tempted, that he can either ſtave off the Temptation, or ſo reſtrain and govern us, that we ſhall either not be led into it, or be quickly extricated from it. Firſt, as to the Tempter, it is plain from the Hiſtory of *Job*, that *Job* was not left in the Power of Satan to tempt him as he pleaſed, or when he pleaſed; he had his Permiſſion from God, before he could begin the Temptation, and was alſo limited by him how far it ſhould go. (*a*) *Haſt thou not made an Hedge about him*, ſays Satan, *and about his Houſe, and about all that he hath on every Side?* Then when he had leave to tempt him, his own Perſon was excepted. I only conclude from hence, that if God thinks fit to interpoſe, he can either effectually reſtrain the Temptation, or limit it to what particular Part of our Concerns he thinks fit. Then as to the Tempted, he can by his Providence remove the Temptation, as he removed *Rabſhekah*'s Army from *Jeruſalem*, by finding them Work enough at home: Or if he thinks fit, for the Trial and Confirmation of our Faith, to let the Temptation come on, he

(*a*) Job i. 10.

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can ſo fortify and arm us, that it ſhall loſe its Force and Efficacy, and we ſhall not be led into it, or be under the Power and Force of it. Or, thirdly, if it prevail upon us, to humble us, and ſhew us our own Weakneſs, God can, when he pleaſes, extricate us out of it; and as to the Effects, diſappoint Satan and all our ſpiritual Enemies, and make us come off with Honour and Advantage, by rendring us more humble, and penitent, and cautious, and watchful for the future.

III. The third Thing here preſuppoſed, is, that it is our Duty earneſtly to beg this Aſſiſtance of God by Prayer. God in his Providence has ſo wiſely contrived Matters, that our ſpiritual Wants call upon us as inceſſantly to draw near to him, as our temporal ones. We have daily Experience of our own Weakneſs, and of the Strength and Vigilance of our Enemies, and of the Multitude of Trials and Temptations. Upon all which Accounts, we have no better Way than to add our fervent Prayers to our fervent Endeavours, ſaying, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

Having cleared both the Meaning of the Words, and the ſeveral Truths preſuppoſed, I come now to a more direct Conſideration of the Petition itſelf; in which I apprehend theſe three or four Things may be contained.

I. That

I. That we pray here for the ſtaving off of ſuch Temptations, as are diſproportioned to our Meaſure of Strength and Grace.

II. That we pray for preventing Grace to keep our Minds in a good Frame and Temper, well fortified againſt all Temptations we may be encountered with.

III. That we pray that God would not deſert us in the Hour of Temptation, but that his Grace may be ſufficient for us, to bring us off victorious.

IV. That we pray that if we are enſnared by any Temptation, we may be quickly delivered from the Power of it, and rendred more humble, penitent, and watchful.

I. Firſt, By theſe Words, *Lead us not into Temptation*, I conceive we are taught here to pray againſt all ſuch Temptations, as are diſproportion'd to our Meaſure of Strength and Grace. And this I am induced to believe to be one Part of the Meaning, for theſe two or three Reaſons. 1. As being very ſuitable to the literal Meaning of the Words, *q. d.* Lord thou knoweſt how eaſily I am overcome by Temptations to Sin, and therefore I humbly beſeech thee either to keep me out of the Way of Temptation, or to proportion my Temptations to my

my Strength, that *with the Temptation I may find a Way to eſcape.* 2. To keep out of the Way of Temptations, is a great Part of our Duty; and therefore I can ſee no Reaſon why we ought not to pray to God to enable us to comply with this Part of our Duty. Not that we are to decline any Trials, that God thinks fit to put us to; but certainly we are, both by our Prayers and Endeavours, to avoid the Temptations of the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh. 3. We have Examples of the greateſt Saints who have prayed againſt being led into Temptation; how earneſtly did our Saviour himſelf pray that (*a*) *the Cup of his Suffering might paſs from him*, tho he immediately corrected it, *But not my Will, but thy Will be done?* Our Saviour likewiſe prayed for St. *Peter*, when he foreſaw his Temptation, *that his Faith might not fail him*; and therefore undoubtedly we may pray the ſame for ourſelves, and for one another.

II. By this Petition we are taught to pray for Preventing Grace, to keep our Minds in a good Frame and Temper, well fortified againſt all Temptations we may be encountered with. It ought to be one Part of our Prayer, that Temptations may never ſurprize us, or catch us at a Diſadvantage. And for this End, two Things are ne-

(*a*) Mat. xxvi 39.

ceſſary, that the Heart be well repleniſhed with Grace, the Underſtanding and Memory with good Notions, the Will with good Reſolutions, the Affections orderly, and the Conſcience clear; then that we keep a good Watch and Look-out, being upon our Guard againſt Temptations, waiting for them, and ready, by the Grace of God, to reſiſt them. We muſt ſtand *armed with the whole Armour of God*, and ſtrive to be expert at the Uſe of every ſpiritual Weapon.

III. By this Petition we are taught to pray, that God would not leave us to ourſelves in the Hour of Temptation, but that his Grace may be ſufficient for us to bring us off victorious. This is taught us in theſe Words, *but deliver us from Evil*; whether it be the evil One, the Devil, or the Evil of Sin, with all its evil Conſequences. There is no Perſon any thing converſant in this Warfare, who, from his own Experience, doth not know a mighty Difference in his ſpiritual Strength, when Temptations aſſault him well fortified with the Grace of God, from what he finds when they aſſault him naked and unarmed, truſting only to his own Strength. In this latter Caſe, he is like *Sampſon* with his Hair cut, and becomes an eaſy Prey to his Enemies; whereas, in the firſt Caſe, he is *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, and able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil.*

IV. Laſtly,

IV. Laſtly, In this Petition we are taught to pray, that if we are enſnared by any Temptation, we may be quickly delivered from the Power of it, and rendred more humble, penitent, and watchful. For this is likewiſe a delivering from Evil, and is often a very good Effect of Temptations upon well-diſpoſed Souls. As *Peter*'s Fall wrought in him a godly Sorrow, and fetched Tears of Repentance, and contributed to the renewing his Zeal and good Reſolutions, ſo it often fares with good Men, that their ſtumbling only occaſions their looking more heedfully to their Ways, and their walking more cautiouſly in the Way of God's Commandments.

Thus much for Explication of the Petition in my Text. I ſhall conclude with an Exhortation or two, grounded on the Words, and what has been offered from them.

1. Firſt then, Here we ſee the proper Remedy for what is the moſt troubleſome Thing in a religious Life; I mean the infinite Number of Temptations, to which we are ſubject, Temptations to Pride and Vanity, to Luſt and Senſuality, to Covetouſneſs and Ambition, to Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, to Anger and Revenge, to Preſumption and Security, to Impatience and Melancholy, to Envy and Diſcontent; and a thouſand other Temptations, to which we are continually expoſed. What are we to do with them? Let us do by them as *Hezekiah* did by *Rabſhekah*'s blaſphemous Letter, let us

ſpread them all before the Lord in Prayer, and beg the Aſſiſtance of his Providence and his Grace; and this we ſhall find the ſureſt Way to be relieved from them. (a) *Watch and pray*, ſays our Saviour, *that ye enter not into Temptation; the Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak.* There is no Duty to which greater Promiſes are made, than to this of Prayer; but there is nothing in which we are greater Infidels. We are more willing to try any other Experiment, but without this they are all Phyſicians of no value. The moſt fixed Reſolution, the moſt diligent Endeavour, unleſs followed with a conſtant Supply of Grace, which is promiſed to fervent Prayer, are but mere Cobwebs againſt Temptations, they'll make nothing of them. And on the other hand, there are no Temptations ſo ſtrong, but what will give Way to Faſting and Prayer. Let us then take all Opportunities to addreſs ourſelves to God, both by Mental and Vocal Prayer, and moſt importunately caſt ourſelves at his Feet, until he have Mercy upon us. But ye will object perhaps, that to be inſtant in Prayer, requires a devout Temper of Mind; but that Dullneſs and Dryneſs in Devotion is one of your Temptations; ye are like the Diſciples, who when they went about Prayer, fell faſt aſleep, and found no Reliſh in that holy Exerciſe. But notwith-

(a) Mark xiv. 38.

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ſtanding this Drowſineſs, which is often incident to good People, our Saviour ſtill called upon them to *Watch and Pray*, and ſo much the rather becauſe of this Infirmity of their Fleſh. There is no better Way to ſhake off this ſpiritual Slumber, than to complain of it in Prayer to God, and to beg that he would rouze us out of it. This we may aſſure ourſelves, the more we frequent ſecret Devotion, the more pleaſant and delightful it will become; and the leſs we frequent it, the more tedious and irkſome it will prove.

2. But as we are thus to pray againſt Temptations, we muſt take care that our Actions and our Prayers be all of a piece; that is, that in our Actions we follow ſuch Courſes as may be moſt effectual for overcoming Temptations; otherwiſe, we only draw near to God with our Lips, while our Hearts and Lives are far from him. There are many Ways whereby we tranſgreſs this Rule. (1.) Many Men become their own Tempters, by raiſing and cheriſhing in their Minds ſuch Thoughts and Imaginations, as pollute the Heart, and prove the Seeds of much Wickedneſs in the Life; Thoughts of Pride and Vanity, Thoughts of Luſt and Uncleanneſs, Thoughts of Anger and Revenge. All ſuch Practices by which we either raiſe or cheriſh Temptations, are directly contrary to this Prayer of my Text. (2.) Whoſoever they are that lay Snares and Temptations for others, to engage them in any Sin of Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, or the

like; theſe Perſons, by their Practice, contradict this Petition, *lead us not into Temptation.* (3.) They who put themſelves in the Way of Temptations, by frequenting lewd Company, by reading laſcivious or Atheiſtical Books, by committing to their Memory profane Songs and Ballads, or by doing any other thing whereby they may probably be enſnared and led into Temptation, act directly contrary to this Part of the Lord's Prayer. (4.) They who kindly entertain and hug a Temptation when preſented, and do not flee from it, but flutter about it ſo long, till at laſt they burn their Wings with it, have themſelves an hand in defeating this Part of their Prayer. (5.) Laſtly, if we would effectually anſwer the End of this Part of the Lord's-Prayer, we muſt take all the moſt effectual Methods we can think of, both to prevent, and to defeat Temptations; ſuch as are the avoiding of Idleneſs, and keeping ourſelves employed in the Buſineſs of our lawful Calling; the keeping of the Mind in a good Temper, not ruffled with Anger, nor debauched with Luſt, nor ſwelled with Pride and Vanity; the keeping a Conſcience void of Offence, ſo that there be no ill Thing in our Hearts to obſtruct our walking with God, the improving our Talent of Grace in a continual doing of good according to our Abilities and Opportunities; a continual Watchfulneſs to foreſee our Danger, eſpecially againſt thoſe Sins to which, by Experience of our own Temper, Conſtitution, and Cir-

Circumſtances, we know ourſelves to be moſt expoſed; and by a frequent Self-Examination of our Heart and Ways, and renewing our good Purpoſes and Reſolutions. If we go on diligently in ſuch Endeavours, joined with our hearty Prayers, there is no doubt we ſhall either be totally preſerved from falling into Temptation, or by the Grace of God, ſhall quickly be renewed by Repentance, till in the End our Chriſtian Warfare ſhall end in the Triumph of everlaſting Peace and Reſt, free from both Sin and Temptation.

Which God of his infinite Mercy, in due time, beſtow upon us all, through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer. To whom, *&c.*

SERMON IX.

MAT. VI. 13.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.

Sermon the Ninth on the Lord's-Prayer.

OF the three Parts into which we diſtributed the Lord's-Prayer, namely, the *Invocation*, the *Petitions*, and the *Concluſion*, or *Doxology*; having ſpoke to the two firſt, the *Invocation* and *Petitions*, we come now to the laſt, the *Concluſion* or *Doxology*, being in theſe Words which I have read, *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever.* Amen.

I ſhall not trouble you with a Diſpute which is among the Learned, Whether theſe Words were put

put in by our Saviour himſelf, as a Part of this excellent Prayer; or whether being a common Concluſion of Prayers in Uſe in the *Jewiſh* Church, as ſuch they were added to this Prayer by the Church. It is certain there are ſeveral eminent Fathers who leave out this Doxology, even where they expreſly explain the Lord's-Prayer, and others of them put it in. St. *Luke* leaves it out: Our Church ſometimes puts it in, and ſometimes leaves it out in the Common-Prayer. But ſince none will object to the Uſefulneſs of it, and it has now for a long Time, ever ſince St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Days, at leaſt, been uſed in the *Greek* Church, I ſhall go on to the Explication of it with the reſt.

The Words will very well bear to be interpreted here, ſo as to have an Aſpect either to Praiſe and Thankſgiving, which is always very fit to be joined with Prayer; or to the Reaſon upon which the preceding Petitions are grounded; or to the Aim and Intent to which all our Devotions are to be directed. I ſhall conſider them all theſe Ways.

1. Firſt, They may be conſidered as an additional Praiſe and Thankſgiving, which is always very fit to be joined with Prayer; *q. d.* We humbly hope for a Grant of theſe our Petitions, when we reflect and conſider that *thine is the Kingdom*, and that thou haſt hitherto defended it againſt all the Attempts of thine and our Enemies; and that thine is *the Power*, and that whenever thou haſt been pleaſed to exert it, there is nothing too hard

for

for thee; and that thine is *the Glory*, that is, that thou haſt always hitherto gained Honour to thyſelf, by granting the Prayers of thy Servants, for that indeed the whole Honour of all they do is ſolely owing to thy Grace. And as it has been ſo in time paſt, it will be ſo for ever and ever, to all Eternity.

Before I leave this Notion of the Words as a *Doxology* or *Thankſgiving*, there are ſome Things I think may properly be obſerved from them. As

I. That it is very fit in our Devotions, to join Thankſgiving to Prayers and Petitions.

II. That the Conſideration of former Mercies, is a great Encouragement in our Addreſſes to Almighty God.

III. That the many Examples we have had of God's aſſerting his Sovereignty, and of his exerciſing his Power, and of the cloſe Conjunction of his Honour with the Happineſs of his Creatures, do all furniſh great Matter for Thankſgiving.

I. That it is very fit in our Devotions to join Thankſgiving to Prayers and Petitions. To do otherwiſe, would look like Ingratitude; and of all Things, there is no greater Obſtructer of new Favours, than Ingratitude for the old. And beſides, Thankſgiving is a more genuine Expreſſion of Love, than

than Petition, and accordingly is a much more rare thing in the World; as our Saviour obſerved of the ten Lepers that were cleanſed, only one of them returned to give Thanks, *Luke* xvii. 17, 18. *Were there not Ten cleanſed*, ſays he, *but where are the nine? There are not found to give Glory to God, ſave this Stranger.* Now the joining Thankſgiving to Prayer, is much practiced by the beſt Patterns of Devotion we have in the holy Scriptures: Of *David*'s, I ſhall quote only that excellent Prayer of his, when they offered freely towards building the Temple; 1 *Chron.* xxix. 10. what abundance of it runs out in Thankſgiving and Praiſe, *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty; for all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might; and in thine Hand it is to make great, and to give Strength unto all.* And St. *Paul* exhorts, that *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions*, and giving of Thanks, *be made for all Men*, 1 Tim. ii. 1.

II. I obſerve from this Doxology, that the Conſideration of former Mercies is a great Encouragement in our Addreſſes to Almighty God. The Obſervation how God has delivered his Church and Kingdom at all Times, and in all the greateſt Dangers, is a mighty Encouragement to pray that his

his Kingdom may come in full Strength and Power. The Conſideration of the many Proofs he has given us, both of his Power, and of his Willingneſs and Readineſs to help us out of Dangers, is a moſt prevailing Motive cordially to addreſs him. (*a*) *I was caſt upon thee from the Womb*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *thou art my God from my Mother's Belly; be not far from me, for Trouble is near.*

III. I obſerve that the many Examples we have had of God's aſſerting his Sovereignty, and of his exerciſing his Power, and of the cloſe Conjunction of his Honour with the Happineſs of his Creatures, do all furniſh great Matter for Thankſgiving.

(1.) Firſt, his aſſerting of his Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.* What a mighty Comfort is this againſt all the Attempts of ill Men, who endeavour to ſet the World and the Church in a Combuſtion, to think that God is the Sovereign of the World, and that he will ſupport his own Kingdom: That good Men, when they encounter the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, fight under his Banner, and therefore may go on cheerfully, as being ſure of Succeſs? (*b*) *The Lord reigneth*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *let the Earth rejoyce, let the Multitude of Iſles be glad thereof.*

(*a*) Pſ. xxii. 10, 11. (*b*) Pſ. xcvii. 1.

(2.) The

(2.) The exerciſing of his Power. If Rebels againſt God's Throne were ſtronger than he, it would be no wonder if we were fearful of the Event of any wicked Enterprizes againſt his Church and Kingdom; but when we know before hand that his Power is Almighty, and theirs none but what he is pleaſed to permit, we may go on couragiouſly, and fear no bad Succeſs. The Pſalmiſt has an excellent Meditation on this Subject, *Pſal.* lxii. 9. *Surely Men of low Degree*, ſays he, *are Vanity, and Men of high Degree are a Lie; to be laid in the Balance, they are altogether lighter than Vanity. Truſt not in Oppreſſion, and become not vain in Robbery; if Riches encreaſe, ſet not your Heart upon them. God hath ſpoken once, twice have I heard this, that Power belongeth unto God.*

(3.) The cloſe Conjunction of his Honour with the Happineſs of his Creatures. The Glory of all his Mercies, and Gifts, and Graces, is his; and therefore his Honour, and our Intereſt, are in the ſame Bottom. It is his Honour that a great deal of good be done, and it is by virtue of his Grace that it is done, and therefore in all reſpects it tends to his Glory.

II. Having conſidered the Words as a *Doxology*, or *Thankſgiving*, let us next conſider them as a Motive or Inducement to back our Petitions; as indeed the Particle *For* gives them this Aſpect. Grant us ſuch and ſuch Bleſſings, *for thine is the Kingdom*,

Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory. This brings in the Words of this Text, as the Reaſon why we addreſs theſe Petitions to Almighty God, and as the Reaſon why he will grant them. Let us ſee then what Relation there is between the Petitions, and theſe Conſiderations upon which they are advanced.

Hallowed be thy Name; that is, let thy Honour be principally regarded in every Thing, for this is thy Due. Thou art the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; thine is the Kingdom in Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, the Devils themſelves being the Miniſters of thy Wrath, the Executioners of thy Juſtice. And as the principal Honour is thy due, ſo thou haſt Power enough to compaſs it, and to make uſe of thy Power; for this End will tend to thy Glory.

Thy Kingdom come; that is, let thy Goſpel flouriſh and proſper, being the great Means whereby thy Throne may be eſtabliſhed in the Hearts of Men. And is it not moſt juſt to requeſt this of God, whoſe Right it is to rule in Mens Hearts, and who by his Grace and Providence, can make the Means ſucceſsful; and who by ſo doing will gain Honour and Glory to himſelf?

Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. And why ſhould it not, the Inhabitants of this Earth being thy Subjects, and owing thee Obedience, as well as the Inhabitants of Heaven? This is a Part of thy Kingdom, tho' too long revolted from thee, and ſuch a Part, as thou haſt not, as yet, ſentenced

to

to everlaſting Miſery, like the fallen Angels; but a Part, which by thy Son, thou art uſing the moſt effectual Means to recover. And as they are a Part of thy Kingdom, ſo thou haſt the Power in thy own Hand to recover them, by affording the external Means, and the internal Grace; and this will tend both to their Happineſs, and to thy Honour and Glory.

Give us this Day our daily Bread. And who can poor ſtarving Subjects apply themſelves to more properly, than to their King; a King with whom there is an inexhauſtible Store of all Bleſſings, and who has it in his Power to diſpenſe them as liberally as he pleaſes? We are thy own Servants, of thy Houſhold and Family, therefore take care that we want not Neceſſaries. This is the leaſt Part of thy Power to procure, who haſt the vaſt Plenty of Earth, and Sea, and Air, all at thy Command, and by thy heavenly Influences canſt make all as fruitful as thou pleaſeſt. This likewiſe will tend to thy Honour, to have all thy Creatures depend upon thee, and to have all that depend upon thee well ſupplied.

And forgive us our Treſpaſſes; as Mercy is one of thy Royal Properties, and thou haſt it in thy Power to diſpoſe us for thy Mercy, by working in us a true Repentance for all our Sins; and this likewiſe will be much more for thy Honour and Glory, than to leave us to periſh in our Sins.

And

And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. Abandon us not ſo as the Tempter may have any Advantage over us, but by thy Grace deliver us from his Snares; he is ſeeking to withdraw us from thy Service, and to corrupt us in our Obedience to thee our rightful Lord and King; and therefore who can we flee to, to protect us againſt his Strength and Snares, but unto thee, to defend thy own Kingdom, as thou haſt an Almighty Power to do it, and it will tend very much to thy Honour and Glory?

Thus we ſee how naturally theſe Words may be uſed as an Argument, Motive, or Inducement, to back all our Petitions.

III. There is a third Aſpect of the Words, as directing us to the ultimate Aim and End of all our Petitions, which is the Honour and Glory of God. For it ought to be a great Part of our Care in our Prayers, not only to ask Things that are materially good, but likewiſe to have God's Glory directly in our Eye, and to propoſe that as the Hope and Mark at which to level all our Affections. I mean, that what we pray for ſhould not only be good and convenient for us, but a Service to God; and that not only by way of conſequence, but that it ſhould be mainly, and principally and directly in our Intention.

From the Text under this Aſpect, we are taught to purify our Intentions from all ſiniſter Biaſs, that may

may either pervert, or ſo much as leſſen the Dignity of our Petitions. And therefore firſt let us not preſume to call upon God to bleſs us in any ill Deſign; what is not for his Honour, we are not to expect that he will countenance. Secondly, let us not load our Devotions with Petitions about Things in their own Nature indifferent; unleſs it be conditionally, in ſo far as God ſees they may tend to his Honour and Glory. Thirdly, let not our Petitions reſt in any inferiour Good, but let them be directed to an higher and more noble Purpoſe; if we beg any valuable Talent of God, let us likewiſe beg the Grace to make a good Uſe of it, in his Service.

The Text being thus explained there are ſome Inferences I would draw from it more immediately tending to good Life and holy Practice.

1. The firſt ſhall be to recommend the Duty of Thankſgiving to Almighty God from this Doxology. (*a*) *In every Thing give Thanks* is one of St. *Paul's* Rules; and particularly it is a noble Part of Devotion to obſerve and to return Thanks for all Mercies both publick and private, and to take notice of the remarkable Paſſages of God's Providence to our ſelves and others, according to that notable Advice of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* cvii. *O that Men would praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs, and for his wonderful*

(*a*) 1. Theſ. v. 18.

Works to the Children of Men. Much Good is to be learned by ſuch Obſervations, as is ſaid in that ſame Pſalm, *Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe Things even they ſhall underſtand the loving Kindneſs of the Lord.*

2. The next Inference I ſhall make ſhall be from this Doctrine of the Text, that the Kingdom is God's, that is, that the whole World is under his Government. From hence I would infer that our Minds may reſt quiet and contented from many Fears and Troubles which might be apt to give us a great deal of Uneaſineſs. If God governs the World then it ſhall be well with them that fear God; we may ſafely reſign ourſelves to him and diſburden all our Anxieties into his Boſom. We may reſt confident of This that all Things ſhall work together for the Good of them who love him. Not but that there are many dark and difficult Things in God's Providence, which we can't comprehend; but that is often occaſioned by our Ignorance, and obſerving the Work of Providence only by parts, without ſeeing through the main Plot and Deſign of it, and if at that time we ſhould go about to form a Scheme of it, very probably it would be wild wrong. *e. g.* If a Man taking notice of the Imperiouſneſs and Cruelty of *Pharoah*, and of all the oppreſſive Edicts he gave out and put in execution againſt the People of *Iſrael*, ſhould at that time have reflected on Providence, he would have been apt to be tempted to very hard Thoughts of

of God for permitting ſuch Cruelty and Oppreſſion in any of his Vicegerents. But if the ſame Perſon could have had patience till God delivered his People out of *Egypt*, and till he had got him Honour upon *Pharaoh* and all his Hoſt by drowning them in the Red Sea, he would then have had cauſe to juſtify God's Providence in the Reſcue of the Innocent and the Puniſhment of the Guilty. As then the Kingdom is God's, let us learn to have reverent and becoming Thoughts of his Government, and not dare ſo much as in our Thoughts to aſperſe it. And as we are thus to have honourable Conceptions of God and his Kingdom, let us likewiſe learn to behave ourſelves as obedient Subjects to him, to have no commerce with any of his Enemies, but to be faithful to him to the Death that we may obtain a Crown of Life. Is God the King of all the Earth, then in all our Grievances let us addreſs ourſelves to him, and depend upon him, he will bring it to paſs. And as earthly Courtiers are very ambitious of the Favour of their Prince, let us be extremely ambitious of God's Favour, which is not purchaſed by Flattery or any of thoſe baſe Arts ſo common among the Courts of earthly Princes, but by downright Honeſty and Sincerity.

3. My third Inference ſhall be fetched from God's Power; the Conſideration of which ſhould teach us to reſt ſecure that no Force or Fraud of Men or Devils ſhall be able to wreſt the Sceptre out of his Hand, or to do us the leaſt Hurt but by his Permiſ-

ſion, for his own wiſe Ends and Purpoſes. Feeble Governments are under continual Apprehenſions from their more potent Neighbours; but as God's Authority is over all, his Power is commenſurate with his Authority; no Weapon formed againſt his Kingdom ſhall proſper. This is a mighty Security to the Church, that all Attempts againſt her ſhall be but like the building the Tower of *Babel* which thoſe Giants deſigned ſhould have reached unto Heaven; but God can eaſily confound and puniſh all ſuch Devices; and the Earth may rejoice that it is under his Government.

4. The laſt Inference I ſhall make is, from this Obſervation of my Text, that the Glory of all the good Things, we are directed to pray for, is God's likewiſe; which I take to be a Point of the greateſt Comfort, that our Duty and Happineſs do not draw one Way, and God's Honour another Way, but that one and the ſame Method anſwers both thoſe noble Ends. Or indeed, to ſpeak more properly, both theſe are one and the ſame Thing; we can't conſult God's Honour better than by promoting our own Salvation. This is a great Comfort that his Ends and ours do not in the leaſt interfere, but Holineſs and Happineſs and God's Honour are Things reciprocal. From hence too we may learn to whom all the Honour of our good Duties is due, even to Almighty God. It is he that directs this way of Duty; it is he that gave us the Faculties, wherewith we are made capable

of

of going about it; it is he that furniſhes us the Means; and it is he that ſupplies us with Grace to make the right Uſe of thoſe Means, ſo that in all reſpects the Glory of all is due unto him.

There is one Circumſtance added which crowns all the reſt; namely, the Circumſtance of Time, or rather Eternity. For the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are his for ever, which doth infinitely enhaunce the Price of them. We ſee the beſt ſettled Governments in this World are notwithſtanding ſubject to Changes and Revolutions. And the Servants and Favourites of any Prince, if they are not changed in his Time, as they commonly are, ſeldom ſtand in his Succeſſor's. Or if Favourites were ever ſo ſure of the Continuance of their Intereſt with their Prince, and that he were impregnable againſt all the Repreſentations and Suggeſtions of their Enemies; yet who can ſecure the Prince himſelf from human Caſualties? And if he falls, then there is a great Train of Ruins to all his Adherents and Dependants. But here is a Kingdom that can never be ſhaken; here is a Power that can never be controuled; here are Laurels that never fade; and therefore here is a laſting Cauſe and Occaſion for our making theſe our Addreſſes to our heavenly Father, and for our relying on him with all Confidence for the Grant of them.

We are now come to the laſt Word of this Prayer, the Word *Amen*; which is ſo ſignificant in the Original, that Interpreters not being able to

find any Word in our modern Languages, whereby to expreſs it, leſt it uninterpreted. There are two Things here chiefly meant by it. 1*ſt*. It is a general Aſſent to all that went before, a freſh renewing of all the Petitions, like that Reſponſe in our Liturgy: *We beſeech thee to hear us good Lord*; it is a following of the Prayers with a winged Deſire and hearty Affection, proceeding from the Warmth of Devotion, earneſtly preſſing what was before expreſſed. 2*ly*. It is ſomething more than this; namely, a Signification of our Faith and Hope to obtain what we have prayed for. Now theſe two Intimations of the Senſe of the Word may briefly put us in mind of ſo many Parts of our Duty with relation to our Prayers. Firſt, that we ſhould endeavour with freſh elevated Affections to preſent our Requeſts unto God; not in ſuch a dull lifeleſs Manner, as if we were indifferent whether they be granted or no. The Love of God, from which our Devotions ought to proceed, and the vaſt Importance of the Bleſſings we pray for, and the Miſery in which we ſhall be involved if they are not granted, ſhould oblige us to follow them with ardent Affections, and to be very preſſing and earneſt for the Grant of them. Then the other Part of Duty we are here put in mind of, is to accompany our Prayers with Faith and Hope that they ſhall be granted. So that the Word *Amen* is, as if we ſhould ſay, ſo be it, and ſo I truſt it will be.

Having

Having now finiſhed my Explication of this excellent Prayer, what remains but that we daily improve in the Meditation and Exerciſe of it, whether as a perfect Form in itſelf, or as an excellent Pattern for all our other Devotions. Above all let us take care that we put up no Petitions contrary to, or inconſiſtent with theſe; and that there be a perfect Harmony between our Prayers and our Actions, and between our Actions and Affections; and then we ſhall not need to doubt the granting of our Petitions put up in the Name of our bleſſed Mediator and Redeemer Chriſt Jeſus.

To him with the Father and the holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON X.

MAT. VI. 14.

For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, *your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you.*

V. 15. *But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.*

Firſt Sermon on this Text.

THE firſt Word *For* ſhews the Dependance of theſe Words on the preceding Petitions; and the ſubject Matter here handled, doth eaſily direct us to what Part of them they do refer: Namely, to that Petition, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* It

was

was not to be expected that our Saviour would interrupt the Prayer ſo long, as to account for any Petition that might ſeem diſagreeable to the prejudicate Opinions of his Hearers. But now the Prayer being ended, he thought fit to clear that Petition, or rather the Condition annexed to that Petition, which ſuſpends the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, upon our forgiving others who have treſpaſſed againſt us; that being the only Thing, which ſeemed to want Explication in the whole Prayer.

And indeed it muſt be confeſſed to be *dignus vindice nodus*, to be a Difficulty worth the clearing, and that it was not fit to be left to Interpreters, but worthy of a Solution from our Saviour himſelf. For it was pretty obvious, not only for ſuch uncharitable People as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, whoſe moral Doctrine our Saviour was all this while correcting, but for others too to be offended at this Petition; as if God's infinite Bounty and Goodneſs and Mercy to us were to be meaſured out by our ſcanty Bounty, Goodneſs and Mercy to one another. This therefore might have looked like a looſe and leſs accurate Expreſſion; but our Lord thought fit deliberately to repeat the ſame again, and to aſſert that the Charity to forgive our Enemies is, a neceſſary Diſpoſition to qualify us for this Prayer, and a neceſſary Condition to the Grant of it: And the particle *As*, which occaſioned the chief Doubt, he explained better in theſe Words of my Text. *For*

if

if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, &c. q. d. Do not wonder that I annex this Condition to your aſking Pardon of God, that ye ſhould pardon one another; it is not that I expect or require ſuch Mercy in you as is in God Almighty, but one of an inferiour Degree, at an infinite Diſtance, yet ſome way ſuited or proportioned to it.

In ſpeaking to the Words, I ſhall

I. Explain the merciful Temper and Diſpoſition which is required in us.

II. Conſider the Promiſe of Reward annexed to it, that it ſhall be attended with a Pardon from God.

III. Conſider the Threatning to the contrary Temper and Diſpoſition, that without it no Pardon is to be obtained.

I. As to the firſt, the merciful Temper and Diſpoſition required here in the Text, and in many other Places of the *New Teſtament*, with regard to thoſe who have injured us; we are not to imagine that it is to be carried ſo far as if it left no Room for a juſt Reparation of Injuries. Some deluded Enthuſiaſts indeed have ſo far miſtaken our Saviour's Doctrine, as to cut off the Office of Judges and Magiſtrates, and to prohibit or prevent all both publick and private Reparation: Which would occaſion

occaſion all manner of Diſorder and Confuſion in the World. That I may then more diſtinctly conſider this Matter, I ſhall both negatively and poſitively lay down what appears to me to be the true Scripture Notion of Forgiveneſs.

1. That it never was deſigned to encourage, but to prevent Injuries, appears both from the Reaſonableneſs of the Thing, and from the Approbation of the Magiſtrate's Office in Holy Scripture: (*a*) For the Magiſtrate is deſcribed as a Perſon that is not to *Bear the Sword in vain*; but is to be *the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* And therefore what is here ſaid has no Relation at all to the Magiſtrate's Office any further than to prohibit his making Uſe of his Power out of private Pique and Reſentment.

2. For the ſame Reaſon this Doctrine of Forgiveneſs doth not reſtrain private Perſons, when they are injured, from making uſe of the Laws, Judges, and Magiſtrates, to do themſelves Right, after they have firſt in vain tried what other pacificatory Methods are in their Power. There are indeed many Things with relation to Law-ſuits, in which this Chriſtian Doctrine interpoſes either to prevent them, or to make an end of them in an amicable Way; but if that cannot be done, the laſt Reſort is ſtill to the publick Juſtice, not to private Re-

(*a*) Rom. xii. 4

venge.

venge. To explain myſelf a little clearer on this Head, I ſhall inſtance in ſome Things, in which this Chriſtian Doctrine of Forgiveneſs regulates our Conduct as to our ſeeking Reparation by Law. (1.) Firſt then, there are many leſſer Injuries, which it will teach us to wink at, without giving our ſelves or our Neighbours the Trouble of a Law-ſuit about them. A Man is juſtly reckoned litigious, who for every Trifle that occurrs, for every old Quarrel that had been formerly laid aſleep, for every Neglect or Want of Civility and good Manners, preſently gives way to his Reſentments, and drives Things to Extremities, which had better been connived at, and covered with a Cloak of Charity. There is no Man but will confeſs it had been much better, for example, in *Haman* to have overlooked or deſpiſed *Mordecai's* Stiffneſs, who would not bow to him in the Gate, than to have drove it to that Height of Reſentment, which he did againſt *Mordecai* and all his Country-men. And our Saviour has determined that as to ſeveral ſmall Injuries, we had better run the hazard of a ſecond Injury than revenge the firſt, for that is the true Meaning of hisPrecepts of turning the other Cheek, and parting with the Cloak as well as the Coat, and going two Miles inſtead of one. (2.) This Doctrine of forgiving of Injuries, will teach us, if the Injury is ever ſo great, before we have recourſe to Law and Magiſtrates, to try all other amicable Methods of Agreement, and Accommodation. Our

Saviour

Saviour lays down a Method in the 18*th Chap.* of this Goſpel, which has in it divers amicable Steps towards Reconciliation, before he would permit Chriſtians to implead one another before Heathen Magiſtrates. For firſt, he adviſes the diſcourſing the Matter with the Party himſelf. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone: If he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy Brother.* How much better a Step is this than the Way which is commonly taken, not of arguing civilly with him alone, but of expoſing him to all others? The next Step our Saviour adviſes is a Conference with our Adverſary in the preſence of one or two Witneſſes, who it is ſuppoſed may aſſiſt towards making up of the Difference. *But if he will not hear thee,* ſays he, *then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witneſſes, every Word may be eſtabliſhed.* This is another excellent Step towards Peace, the Interpoſition of Friends, who are commonly more free from the Byaſs of Prejudice and Enmity, which is a great Obſtruction to the Parties their diſcerning the Truth, or complying with it when it is diſcerned. A third Step our Saviour preſcribed before he allowed them to go to Law before the Magiſtrates, who at that time were Heathens, was *to tell it to the Church,* that is, as St. *Chryſoſtom* interprets it, to the Rulers of the Chriſtian Aſſemblies; meaning I ſuppoſe that Chriſtian Congregation to which they belong, thinking that

that probably theſe Perſons would have greater Weight and Intereſt with the contending Parties than any other whatſoever. But then laſtly, if after all this the offending Party was obſtinate; *If he neglect to hear the Church,* ſays our Saviour, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican.* There is ſome Difference among Intepreters as to the Meaning of this laſt Direction. But I think their Opinion moſt probable and moſt agreeable to the Context, who interpret the Paſſage thus; If none of theſe above-mentioned Methods will do, then at laſt thou mayſt implead him as thou wouldſt do an Heathen before the Heathen Magiſtrate, and right thyſelf by Law there. Now to adapt this Method to the Times of Chriſtianity countenanced by the Magiſtrate, certainly this Doctrine of Forgiveneſs of Injuries in my Text, ſhould ſo far reſtrain us from Litigiouſneſs, that we ſhould firſt try the Ways of Reconciliation both by perſonal Conferences, and the Interpoſition of Friends, before we go to Law with one another. (3.) This Doctrine of Forgiveneſs ſhould teach us as to our Lawſuits ſo to manage them, as to retain no Malice in our Hearts againſt the Perſon of our Brother, with whom we have the Difference. We are by no means to aim at his Hurt or Prejudice in any ſort; far leſs are we to ſet off our own Cauſe or to blacken his by any ſiniſter Arts, ſuch as diſcouraging of true or ſuborning of falſe Witneſſes, or advancing any manner of Untruths, or repreſenting any Thing

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in a falſe Light to our own Advantage, or our Neighbour's Prejudice.

3. This Doctrine of the Forgiveneſs of Injuries doth not oblige us to a patient Suffering of all Injuries offered or intended us, without ſtanding upon our own juſt Defence, or withdrawing ourſelves out of the way of Injury. As to withdrawing, our Saviour is very poſitive as to the Lawfulneſs of it. (*a*) *When they perſecute you in one City*, ſays he, *flee to another*, The other of ſtanding upon our Self-defence when injured; we find St. *Paul*'s Example for it, who both ſollicited the Aſſiſtance of the Magiſtrate, and accepted of a Guard of Soldiers to conduct him out of the Danger he had Intelligence of. And as to our Saviour's ordering *Peter* to put up his Sword when attacked, that makes nothing againſt this Doctrine; (*b*) for the Perſons he drew his Sword againſt were the *Officers* of the publick Magiſtrates, who came with their Orders to apprehend him. Now the uſing the Sword in this Caſe muſt be unjuſt both by the Laws of God and Man; for let the Cauſe be what it will, the Magiſtrate muſt have a Power to ſend out his Officers to call any Perſon that is accuſed before him; and thoſe Officers in doing ſuch a lawful Act are not to be reſiſted. But our Saviour's prohibiting the taking of the Sword, that is, the aſſuming it

(*a*) Mat x. 23. (*b*) Mat. xxvi. 52.

without

without Law or Authority, is not extended to a Prohibition of it in our lawful Defence, as againſt Thieves and Robbers, or any other who have no Right to aſſault us or to take away our Life, or Liberty or Property.

Having conſidered what is not prohibited by this Doctrine of forgiving Injuries, *viz.* Not the Magiſtrate's Office of puniſhing Offenders; not the private Subject's repairing to the Magiſtrate to do him Right, if he can in a more friendly Way come at it, not our ſtanding in our own Defence againſt an unjuſt Invader: Let us next enquire what is expreſly required of us Chriſtians by this Duty of forgiving Men their Treſpaſſes. Three Things are chiefly required.

1. That we actually forgive, and paſs by many Treſpaſſes, without expecting any Reparation.

2. That we do not avenge ourſelves as to any Injuries that are done us.

3. That we entertain no Malice or Hatred in our Heart againſt our Adverſary, but that we go by the Rules of Equity and good Conſcience, whether in righting ourſelves or others.

1. This Duty of forgiving Men their Treſpaſſes, obliges us actually to paſs by and forgive many Treſpaſſes, without expecting any Reparation and theſe are chiefly. (1.) All ſuch Treſpaſſes, as have not proceeded out of Malice, but Ignorance, Miſtake, or Miſinformation. (2.) All ſuch Treſpaſſes as are but ſmall in their Nature or Conſequences,

ſuch

ſuch as human Nature is very liable to. (3.) All ſuch Treſpaſſes wherein Men have not ſo much been the Principals themſelves, but have been led away with a violent Torrent of Authority, Cuſtom or general Prejudice. (4.) All ſuch Treſpaſſes as have not been particular to them who did the Injury, but common to them with a great many, and in which perhaps they have been obliged to execute the Orders of their Superiours upon peril of their own utter Ruin; for we are to conſider that every one has not the Courage to reſiſt an ill thing to Martyrdom, and not many to the Loſs of Places and Preferments, and the Hazard of their Eſtates and Expectations. (5.) All thoſe Treſpaſſes, which are not capable of Reparation any other way than by Confeſſion and Repentance, and begging Pardon, provided they were only Injuries to ourſelves, and that the Example of the Impunity of them is not prejudicial to others, it is much more generous to forgive. (6.) All thoſe Treſpaſſes which flow from Errors of Conſcience, and miſtaken Principles of Religion: Provided they have no further ill Effects, raiſing Diſturbance or Sedition in the State, are much better tolerated and forgiven than puniſhed, any other way than by prudent Diſcouragements, without Perſecution. There may be ſome other Species of Treſpaſſes, deſerving Pardon, which I have not enumerated; and even theſe I have mentioned are ſubject to many Limitations and Exceptions:

The Circumſtances of the Caſe ſo varying, that our Pardon without a new Crime can reach no further than our own Hearts, and our own Abſtinence from Revenge; though perhaps in is no way conducive to the Publick, that the injurious Perſon eſcape uncenſured or unpuniſhed. And this leads me to the,

2. Second Thing I told you, was included in this Duty of forgiving Men their Treſpaſſes; namely, to abſtain from all Avenging of ourſelves. Where Vengeance is neceſſary, God has put it into other Hands, the Hands of the Magiſtrate his own Vicegerent, and doth by no means leave it to the injured Perſon to right himſelf by his own Hand. We have nothing to do then but one of theſe two when we Think we are injured, either entirely to remit the Offence, which is the more generous Part of the two, where it has no bad Conſequences on our Neighbours, or the Publick; or elſe if it be not an Offence fit to be remitted, we muſt have our recourſe to the Magiſtrates and the Law, both to judge of the Wrong and to order us due Reparation. There is a great deal of Reaſon for this Conduct, whether we conſider the Authority of God, the Right of Magiſtrates, the Peace of Subjects, the Quiet of the Injured, or the Puniſhment of the Injurious; for in all theſe reſpects it is much fitter that the Avenging of Injuries be committed to the Magiſtrate than left to the injured Perſon. (1.) As

to

to the Authority of God, Vengeance or punitive Juſtice is a Prerogative which he reſerves to himſelf and his Vicegerents, and ſtrictly prohibits to all others. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves,* ſaith St. *Paul,* Rom. xii. 19. *but rather give place unto Wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay it, ſaith the Lord.* And therefore we find ſo many Prohibitions of private Revenge in the Holy Scriptures, which I ſhall not now ſpend your Time to repeat. (2.) Private Vengeance is an Invaſion of the Magiſtrate's Office; for the Magiſtrate is ſet up for this very Purpoſe, as appears from that forecited Place, *Rom.* xiii. *To be a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* Now what Occaſion would there be for this Office, if every Man were to avenge himſelf? (3.) As to the Peace of Subjects, it is much better conſulted this way by taking Vengeance out of private, and putting it into publick Hands. It is plain if it were in private Hands, it would be liable to many more Inconveniences, touching the Peace and good Government of the World, than it is in the preſent Method in which God has put it. Sometimes the injured Perſon by reaſon of his Weakneſs of Body, and Want of Friends, would have no Reparation at all; and the Conſequence of this would be that all the Strong and Rich of the World would be Oppreſſors, and all the Weak and Poor oppreſſed. Often the Injured having his Underſtanding blinded and

his Judgment byaſſed with Reſentment, would be apt to fancy Injuries where there are none; and to magnify and aggravate them where they are, and to puniſh and avenge them far beyond what they deſerve. Upon which the Affront and Injury would then come to lie on the other ſide; and that other Party would think himſelf obliged to retaliate as ſmartly as he could; and thus the Saw of Contention would be continually a drawing; Adverſaries and all their Friends would be engaged, and the whole World would for their mutual Support run into ſo many Clans, that right or wrong would eſpouſe each others Quarrels, and be the Miniſters and Inſtruments to execute one another's Revenge. (4.) As to the Quiet of the injured Perſons, if Revenge were put into their Hands, they would have no Quiet at all, but their Minds would be continually agitated with thoſe deviliſh Paſſions of Malice and Revenge, which would allow them no Quiet in their Conſciences, or Peace in their Lives; whereas now they have nothing to do but quietly to commit their Cauſe to God and his Vicegerents. (5.) Laſtly, if we conſider the Puniſhment of, or the doing of Juſtice on the injurious Perſon, it could never ſo ſurely, nor ſo juſtly overtake him, were it in private Hands, as now when it is left to the publick Magiſtrate, who is both better armed with Power, and better balanced with Juſtice than could be expected from the private Adverſary.

3. This

3. This Duty of forgiving Men their Treſpaſſes obliges us, in the righting of ourſelves, to take care that we be ſtill in Charity with our Adverſary; and that we harbour no Malice or Hatred in our Hearts againſt him. Under the former Head of not avenging ourſelves, the chief Thing aimed at was the regulating of our external Actions; but now this other Part of Forgiveneſs goes a great deal further, and ſecures the Love of our Adverſary, directing us purely to the doing of Juſtice, and the Reparation of Injuries, without any Thoughts of Hatred or Revenge againſt the Perſon of him who did us the Injury: So that though we are allowed to endeavour the righting of ourſelves, we are forbid all Manner of Revenge againſt him. And how to make this Diſtinction, and how to clear our Hearts of this Hatred, which commonly attends the ſeeking of Reparation, is what will require ſome farther Explication. And indeed the Thing is not ſo difficult but that a Diſtinction may very eaſily be made between doing of Right, and hating the Perſon who did the Wrong; for ſuppoſe that Perſon one of our own deareſt Friends, if he has wronged another Man, would not we have him to make Reparation to him that he has injured, if it were but for the good of his own Soul? And why may we not in like manner love the Perſon and yet hate the Injuſtice, and endeavour a due Reparation of it? And as to the Sin and Injury, why we may

not forgive it, and pray to God to forgive it; and continue to do all good Offices to him, as if he had never injured us, is no hard Matter to conceive. It is this inward Love cultivated by all good Offices which we are to ſtudy, and to ſhew our ſelves free from all Reſentment, if ever we have that Perſon in our Power, not retaliating his Injuries, or rendring Evil for Evil, but doing him all the Good we have an Opportunity of doing.

Thus now I have explained the Duty of forgiving Men their Treſpaſſes. It is a Duty which our Saviour failed not upon all Opportunities to inculcate; ſo that there is no Duty more recommended either by his Doctrine or Example. Particularly, it is very conſiderable that he made this Duty a Part of that ſhort Prayer which he taught his Diſciples; and that now again, immemediately after the Prayer, he comes and gives us the Reaſon of it, that our own Forgiveneſs depends upon it; and this likewiſe he doubly recommends, firſt by way of Promiſe, that *If ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes our heavenly Father will alſo forgive us:* And then by way of Threatning, that *if we forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will our Father forgive our Treſpaſſes.* I have, I ſay, given you a Deſcription of the Duty; but Time not ſerving to conſider the Promiſe and Threat-

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ning annexed, I muſt refer them to an other Opportunity.

God bleſs what we have heard, and give us a right Underſtanding in all Things.

To him be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XI.

MAT. VI. 14.

For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, **your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you.**

V. 15. **But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.**

Second Sermon on this Text.

HAVING, in a former Diſcourſe on theſe Words, given you a Deſcription of the merciful Temper and Diſpoſition, required by our Saviour in this Duty of Forgiveneſs of Injuries; I proceed now to the Promiſe here made to them who perform the Duty, and the Threatning to them who refuſe or neglect to comply with it.

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The Promiſe is, that God will forgive them who are of this merciful forgiving Temper: *If ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you.* And the Threatning is, that God will repay them in their own Coin, who are of a contrary Diſpoſition; for as they are hard-hearted to thoſe who have injured them in this World, and execute their Revenge to the utmoſt, they ſhall meet with the ſame Treatment from Almighty God in the World to come. *But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.*

Before I conſider this Promiſe and Threatning apart, there is one general Obſervation I ſhall ſpeak to, concerning the great Equity of God's Promiſes and Threatnings, I mean how well adapted they are to the ſeveral Virtues and Vices to which they are annexed. It was an old Obſervation of the Pſalmiſt, that God, both in the way of Rewards and Puniſhments, fitted all Sorts of People in their ſeveral kinds, *Pſal.* xviii. 25. *With the Merciful thou wilt ſhew thyſelf merciful; with an upright Man, thou wilt ſhew thyſelf upright; with the Pure, thou wilt ſhew thyſelf pure; and with the Froward, thou wilt ſhew thyſelf froward:* Meaning this very Thing, that all Men ſhall meet with Rewards and Puniſhments, exactly ſuited to their ſeveral Tempers and Actions in this World. So in the New Teſtament, particularly in this excellent Sermon on the Mount, we find a Kingdom promiſed to the

Poor

Poor in Spirit, Comfort promiſed to the Mourners, quiet Poſſeſſion of the World to the Meek, a ſufficient Competency to the Juſt and Honeſt, Mercy to the Merciful, a Sight of God to the Pure in Heart, who are not carried away with inferiour Objects, an Adoption into the State of the Sons of God to the Peacemakers, and an Advancement to an high Reward in Glory, to them who ſuffer Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake; in all which, if ye obſerve it, there is not only a great Reward promiſed to every Virtue, but that Reward is excellently ſuited and adapted to the Nature of the Virtue, and riſes out of it. The rich Glutton met with ſuch a Puniſhment, that he could not have a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue; but poor *Lazarus*, who had patiently bore his Poverty and Diſeaſes, was tranſlated to Paradiſe, a Place full of all Comforts. *Remember*, ſays Father *Abraham*, *that thou in thy Life-time receiveſt thy good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *evil Things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Now this general Obſervation is remarkably verified in the Perſons adorned with the Virtue of Mercifulneſs in forgiving of Injuries, or blackened with the Vice of Hard-heartedneſs in revenging them in my Text: For both theſe Perſons ſhall be treated ſuitably to their own Temper and Actions; the one ſhall meet

(*a*) Luke xvi. 25.

with

with a merciful God, ready to put the moſt equitable Conſtruction on his Actions, and to pardon his Failings; and the other ſhall meet with the ſame angry and implacable Judge, or Avenger of Injuries, that he himſelf proved to Men when they offended him.

From this general Obſervation, let us now come to a particular Conſideration of the Promiſe and Threatning in the Text, neither of which is without its Difficulty. For as to the Promiſe, is it not very ſtrange, that God's Forgiveneſs, or Pardon, is annexed to this one Duty of our forgiving Men the Treſpaſſes they have committed againſt us, when, perhaps, we are guilty of a great many other ill Things unrepented of, and unreformed? And as to the Threatning, is it not as ſtrange, that if a Man has ever ſo many good Qualities, and is but tainted with this one bad one, that he is of an implacable malicious Temper, ſo as not to forgive an Affront or Injury; he ſhall be damned for this one bad Quality?

That I may account for both theſe Difficulties, it will be neceſſary that we conſider the Excellency of this Temper of forgiving Enemies here ſpoke of, and the Wickedneſs of the contrary Diſpoſition; for then it will appear how reaſonable it is that Pardon of Sins is promiſed to the one, and denied to the other.

I. And

I. And firſt, as to the Excellency of this Temper of pardoning Treſpaſſes, there are theſe few Things I would offer to your Conſideration.

1. That this is a good Quality wherein we do moſt reſemble God. If he were ſtrict to puniſh all our Offences, and did not give us Time for Repentance, and patiently uſe Means to bring us to it, the World could not ſtand one Minute; and there is no Part of God's Attributes more recommended to our Imitation, than this of his Mercifulneſs, both in giving, and in forgiving: (*a*) *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.*

2. That conſidering what we are ourſelves, I mean great Sinners, who have great need of Mercy at the Hands of Almighty God, there is no Virtue more becoming Men in our Circumſtances, whether we be ſuch as have already made our Peace with God, or whether we have it ſtill to make. If we are of the firſt ſort, that our Lord has pardoned that immenſe Debt, the Sins of our whole Life, we have little reaſon to take our Neighbour by the Throat, and to throw him into Priſon till he has payed us all that he owes us. What can be more unbecoming us, or more provoking to our heavenly Father, than ſuch a Behaviour? It is very obſervable from the Parable, which we have in the 18th Chapter of this Goſpel, how the King rates this

(*a*) Luke vi. 36.

unthank-

unthankful Servant to ſome purpoſe, and withdraws his former Pardon: (*a*) *Serve nequam; O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that Debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me; ſhouldſt not thou have had Compaſſion on thy Fellow Servant, even as I had pity on thee. And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him:* it follows, *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes.*

And if we are ſuch as have not yet made our Peace with God, it is dreadful to think what Way we ſhall go about to make it, having beforehand put ſuch an effectual Bar and Obſtruction to it.

3. That conſidering the frequent Changes and Revolutions this World is ſubject to, the Exerciſe of this Virtue is our greateſt Prudence. Neither Riches, nor Honour, nor Power, are for ever; and in all Changes and Revolutions of Fortune, as there are no Men more kindly treated, than they who were moderate and merciful in the Time of their Power and Proſperity, ſo none are more deſpiſed, and fall leſs pitied, than the Cruel and Hard-hearted.

4. Let it be conſidered, that this merciful Temper includes in it a great many of the very chief of the Chriſtian Virtues, to which Heaven is promiſed. I ſhall briefly inſtance in ſeveral of them. 1. Hu-

(*a*) Mat. xviii. 32.

mility

mility is the Foundation of it. The merciful Man has a due Senſe of his own Sins and Demerits, and of his own Errors and Miſtakes; and that makes him ſo moderate and gentle to others that are in Error. Whereas the proud Man thinks his Judgment ought to be the Standard of Truth to all others, and conſequently ought to be received with a ſuperior Degree of Veneration to thoſe of all other Men. 2. This Virtue of Merciſulneſs to thoſe who have treſpaſſed againſt us, includes in it that noble Grace of Self-denial. There is nothing more contrary to Fleſh and Blood, than to paſs by an Injury, when we have it in our Power to avenge it: The forgiving it then, from the Heart, proceeds from a better and higher Principle; and the Man who has learned thus much of Self-denial, to reſiſt ſuch a clamorous Paſſion as Revenge is, it is to be hoped is in a fair way, by the ſame Principle of Self-denial, to overcome all his other Corruptions; and this, if duly followed, will put him in a Capacity of the Promiſe of my Text, of obtaining a general Pardon of Almighty God; eſpecially if we conſider, 3. That this Virtue of Merciſulneſs, is a certain ſure Mark of the Love both of God and our Neighbour prevailing in our Hearts. Firſt, Of the Love of God; for what better Proof can be given of that, than our complying with one of the difficulteſt of his Precepts, namely, the forgiving of Enemies? If it ſhould be replied to this, that the forgiving of Treſpaſſes may proceed from

other

other worſe Principles, ſuch as Cowardice, Lazineſs, or Hypocriſy. I anſwer briefly, that this Forgiveneſs from the Heart, as it is called in that forecited Parable, and which is the Forgiveneſs meant in my Text, can't proceed from theſe, or any other wrong Principles, but from a true Love to God and Man; Hypocriſy doth not reach the Heart, and contents itſelf with an outward Shew and Oſtentation; Cowardice, every one knows, is more inclined to Cruelty than true Courage is; and as for a Lazineſs of Temper, Revenge is commonly the ſhorteſt Way, whereas the recovering and gaining of an Adverſary, is a Work of Time and Pains. And as Merciſulneſs is a Sign of the Love of God, it is no leſs a Sign of the Love of our Neighbour; at leaſt it is the performing the moſt difficult Part of that Duty. It is an eaſy thing to love our Friends, or any others who have done us no Harm, but the great Difficulty is to love them who have injured us; if we can once get over this, there is no other Part of Duty to our Neighbour we ſhall need to fear the atchieving; eſpecially if we conſider, 4. That this Love and Charity in the Heart, prevents all the uſual Occaſions of Quarrel and Diſcord; it is apt to interpret all our Neighbour's Actions in the moſt candid and charitable Senſe; it reſtrains the Tongue from provoking injurious Words, which are commonly the firſt Beginners of Differences; and occaſions Peace and Quiet both in our own Conſciences, and in Families, Neighbourhoods,

bourhoods, and Governments, by withdrawing Fewel from the Fire of Contention, and ſo extinguiſhing it; whereas a malicious revengeful Temper, is compoſed of quite contrary Ingredients, and has quite contrary Effects, as we ſhall ſee by and by.

But before I leave this firſt Part, I hope, by this Time, the Difficulty ariſing from this Promiſe is voided; it appearing from what has been ſaid, that hearty Forgiveneſs of Injuries is not one ſingle Virtue, but a Complication of all the moſt valuable and fundamental Graces and Virtues, ſuch as Humility, Self-denial, Love of God and Man, good Government of the Tongue, Patience, Peaceableneſs, Prudence, and Friendſhip; and that the ſame Principles from which it proceeds, if duly proſecuted, will produce all other Chriſtian Virtues, and make us perfect in all other Chriſtian Duties whatſoever; and therefore we need no longer doubt the Truth of the firſt Aſſertion in my Text, that *if we forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, our heavenly Father will alſo forgive us.* So much for the Promiſe.

II. Let us next conſider the Threatning, *But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.* I hope it will not be forgot here, what I explained in opening up of the Words, that it is not the publick Juſtice of the Magiſtrate, but private Reſentment and Revenge, whether of the Magiſtrate, or of private Perſons, which

which our Saviour is here guarding againſt. And this Notion we muſt carry along with us, that we may the better diſcover the Deformity of the Vice, and apprehend the Reaſon why God does ſo ſeverely threaten it. In the Compoſition of it, there is a Concurrence of a great many ill Things, ſuch as Pride, Anger, Cruelty, Hatred, and a Contempt of the Authority and Inſtitution of Chriſt, together with a Spirit of Unrulineſs, and Contempt of all good Order, Peace, and Diſcipline; and the Effects and Conſequences of it are moſt terrible in producing an innumerable Multitude of great Miſchiefs in the World. It will be fit that we conſider it in both thoſe Reſpects, that we may become ſenſible of the Reaſon of this ſevere Threatning here annexed to it.

To begin with the Ingredients in the Compoſition of it; 1. The firſt I ſhall reckon up is Pride, that we think it below us to take an Affront, or not to retaliate an Injury. And tho for greater Injuries God has provided another Remedy, namely, the lawful Magiſtrate; our Pride makes every the ſmalleſt Injury look big in our Eyes, ſo that many Things which human Laws have taken no notice of, as knowing that it is impoſſible to live in the World, if Juſtice muſt be required for every trivial Matter; and which the Chriſtian Religion too requires us to connive at; yet becauſe we will be wiſer than either our Spiritual or our Temporal Legiſlators, we think fit to take notice of every

Peccadillo in our Neighbour, tho' we would be very angry if any one ſhould pretend to take notice of ſuch, or far greater Faults in ourſelves. Now beſides the manifeſt Injuſtice of this Conduct, there are ſeveral Things in our Circumſtances, which make it particularly odious. Such as theſe; We ourſelves are but poor Slaves, more in Debt to Almighty God, than ever we ſhall be able to acquit: We live purely upon his Mercy, and if he ſhould treat us as we treat others, we ſhould be utterly undone. Beſides, ſuch is our Make and Conſtitution in this corrupt State, that it is impoſſible to guard againſt innumerable Errors, and Follies, and Inducements, which the beſt of Men are ſubject to; only Pride blinds us, that tho' we are very ſharp ſighted to diſcern the ſmalleſt Breach of Duty in our Neighbours, we can't diſcern the greateſt in ourſelves. 2. The ſecond Ingredient I mentioned in this unrelenting revengeful Temper, is Anger. Such Perſons have no Command of their Temper, but ſuffer their inward Reſentment to boil ſo long, till it boils over in injurious Words or Actions. There are many Things which a Man of a meek and calm Spirit would take no notice of, which Men of angry paſſionate Tempers think themſelves obliged to reſent; ſo that Men often ſuffer, not for the ill Things they have done, but becauſe the Perſon to whom they did them, was peeviſh and angry, ſo that nothing could pleaſe or content him. Now in many of

theſe Caſes, Quarrels are unavoidable; for that ſort of Men, tho' they are certainly diſpleaſed with whatever is done, neither they, nor any one elſe, can tell what would pleaſe in any Perſon, againſt whom they have taken up a Prejudice. 3. A third Ingredient in this Temper, is Cruelty, or a Delight in the Miſery and Sufferings of others; the Byaſs of their Hearts leans to the ſevere, not to the merciful Side; and as to any one they think has injured them, their Revenge is limited only by their Want of Power: *You weigh the Violence of your Hands in the Earth*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* lviii. 2. *i. e.* Ye conſider how much Power ye have to do Wickedneſs. For while they ſtretch their Power to the utmoſt to ſatisfy their Malice, they ſhew plain enough, that if they had more Power, their Malice would not want more Work, while it ſets no other Bounds to Revenge, but only Self-preſervation, and ſometimes not that; for they will venture their own Life, that they may have the wicked Satisfaction to deſtroy their Neighbour's. 4. A fourth Ingredient in this hard-hearted Temper, is the Hatred of our Neighbour. It is plain from the Conduct of ſuch Men, that they purſue not the Methods which tend to the Amendment of the offending Brother, but ſuch as may enſnare and exaſperate him. There is this Difference between the Puniſhments of a Father, or Maſter, or upright Magiſtrate, and thoſe of a blood-thirſty Avenger; the one puniſhes out of Love, and with

a Deſign of Amendment; the other out of Hatred, and as delighting in the Puniſhment of the Offender. 5. The fifth Ingredient I ſhall mention in this wicked Temper, is a Contempt of the Laws of God and Chriſt, which in this Particular are ſo plain againſt Revenge, that no Chriſtian can pretend Ignorance; and therefore it muſt be out of a plain Diſregard to thoſe Laws, and out of a deliberate Preference of more carnal Principles, that they act ſo poſitively againſt them, and govern themſelves by thoſe other Principles. 6. The laſt Ingredient I ſhall mention in this wicked Temper, is a Spirit of Unrulineſs, and Contempt of all good Order, Peace, and Diſcipline. The Conſequence of private Revenge, is, that it is an Affront to publick Juſtice, and in thoſe Places where it prevails, quite ſuperſedes it; and what rare Juſtice that will be, that is directed by private Reſentments, it is no hard Matter to conjecture.

Now let any one judge if a Complication of ſo many ill Things, expreſly contrary to the Doctrine and Example of Chriſt, a Doctrine ſo plainly ſet forth, that it wants no Commentary, does not deſerve to be threatned with ſuch a ſevere Threatning as this of my Text, that our heavenly Father will not forgive ſuch Perſons? From all which, it is to be concluded, that this Unmerciſulneſs is in its own Nature a great and damning Sin, and without Repentance and Amendment, ſhall incur

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the Wrath and Curſe of God. And we ſhall be the more convinced of this, if we conſider

The dreadful Conſequences uſually attending the Exerciſe of this private Revenge, which are ſuch that no Tongue can utter, nor Imagination conceive. For what is it that begins? what is it that propagates ſo many Diviſions and Animoſities in all Societies? What is it that makes Men ſo backward to Peace and Moderation, and prevents all healing Methods? What is the Cauſe of all the Schiſms in the Church, and Factions in the State? From whence come Wars, Seditions, and Rebellions, with the innumerable evil Conſequences of them? Nay, from whence come all Diſcords and Jarrings in Families and Neighbourhoods? they come all from this violent, implacable, immoderate Spirit, which ſerves only to enflame every Difference, but to heal and ſettle nothing. There is nothing more contrary to the Peace of Families, nothing more contrary to the Peace of Neighbourhoods, or indeed to the Peace and Quiet of whole Countries, or to the inward Peace of every Man's Soul and Conſcience, than this implacable Temper; and therefore no wonder the Chriſtian Religion ſets itſelf ſo much to diſſwade us from it, as by many other Arguments, ſo particularly by this moſt awakening one in my Text, that our own Pardon of Sins depends upon our pardoning others their Treſpaſſes againſt us.

Now to conclude, it appears plainly from this Text, and what has been ſaid upon it, that a mo-

derate, healing, pardoning Temper, is, in the ſight of God, one of the greateſt Virtues; and that it is commonly in Conjunction with all ſuch other Graces and Virtues, as are requiſite to give us full Aſſurance of God's Favour both here and hereafter: And that, on the contrary, an implacable, immoderate, unrelenting Temper, as it is attended with innumerable ill Conſequences in this World, ſo if it is not repented of, and amended, it ſhall infallibly obſtruct our Pardon at the Hands of Almighty God, and give us over to the dreadful Effects of *Judgment without Mercy*, if we can't be prevailed upon to ſhew Mercy to our far leſs offending Brethren.

But after all, it muſt be confeſs'd, this is a difficult Duty; and therefore, in the firſt Place, it is adviſeable, if poſſible, to live ſo peaceably and inoffenſively with all, that we make no Enemies. And if we meet with Enemies for doing of our Duty, which was the uſual Caſe of the primitive Chriſtians, and is too commonly the Caſe of good Men in this World, let us take care not to retaliate Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrariwiſe Bleſſing, knowing that we are thereunto called, that we may inherit a Bleſſing.

(a) *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of*

(a) Cor. iii. 12.

Mind,

Mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any Man have a Quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.

To him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON XII.

MAT. VI. 16.

Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the Hypocrites, of a sad Countenance: for they disfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.

V. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face:

V. 18. That thou appear not unto Men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: And thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

THE general Subject treated of by our Saviour from the 20*th* Verse of the last *Chapter* is, the discovering the Defects of the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and the exhorting of Christians to higher Degrees of Duty, than those Jewish Doctors either

ther taught or exemplified. In purſuance of this Subject, the Method our Lord ſeems to have followed was, firſt, to take notice of ſuch Corruptions as proceeded from their wrong Gloſſes and Interpretations of the Law; and this ends with the *fifth Chapter*. Then he goes on to ſome other Corruptions, which though they pretended no countenance to them from the Law, yet were great Blemiſhes in their Righteouſneſs; and theſe were chiefly Pride, Covetouſneſs, and Cenſorioufneſs, which they ſo mixed in with other commendable Duties, as utterly to mar the Grace of them. He begins with Pride, and traces it through their Righteouſneſs in general, and three noble Duties, Almſ-giving, Prayer, and Faſting, in particular, inſerting all along ſeveral proper Inſtructions and Directions to his Diſciples concerning the right Way of going about thoſe Duties, ſo as to make them well pleaſing to Almighty God.

And having finiſhed his Remarks upon their Alms, and Devotions, he proceeds now to the Pride of their Faſting; guarding againſt it in the ſame Manner and with the ſame Arguments, he had made uſe of on thoſe other Subjects, and therefore I ſhall need to inſiſt the leſs upon them. *Moreover, when ye faſt, be not as the Hypocrites*, &c. In which Words we have theſe three Things.

I. A commendable Duty obſerved by the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; and which our Saviour ſuppoſes

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muſt be likewiſe obſerved by his Diſciples; namely, the Duty of faſting.

II. The Abuſe of this Duty in thoſe Doctors, to the Ends of Hypocriſy, Pride, and Vanity.

III. Our Saviour's Direction and Encouragement to the contrary Exerciſe of Humility, Secrecy, and Sincerity, in the Practice of this Duty.

I. We have here a commendable Duty obſerved by the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, which our Saviour ſuppoſes muſt be likewiſe obſerved by his Diſciples; namely, the Duty of faſting, *which is either a total Abſtinence from Food for a time; or at leaſt the uſing it leſs delicately, or more ſparingly, on ſome religious Account.* More eſpecially there are theſe three Accounts on which Faſting is uſeful; the Mortifying of Luſt, the Exerciſe of Repentance, and as an Help to Prayer, and Contemplation of divine Things. And as far as it is uſed for thoſe Ends it is a religious Duty. 1. Firſt, I ſay, for the Mortifying of Luſt; it is very uſeful to mortify the Sins of Uncleanneſs, by withdrawing Fewel from a pampered Body. St. *Paul* tells us (*a*) *He kept his Body under, and brought it*

(*a*) 1. Cor. ix. 27.

into

into Subjection: *Leſt that by any Means when he preached the Goſpel to others, he himſelf ſhould be a Caſt away.* 2. Secondly, Faſting is proper as an Exerciſe of Repentance. Thus we find the King of *Nineveh* ordered a very ſolemn Faſt as one Part of the general Repentance which was then gone about. 3. It is a great Help to Prayer, and Contemplation of divine Things; And therefore we find generally theſe Two, Faſting and Prayer, joined together. *Peter* was faſting and praying when he had that heavenly Viſion concerning preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, *Act.* x. And *Cornelius* on the ſame Occaſion was Faſting and Praying when he had the heavenly Viſion concerning ſending for St. *Peter*, who was to preach the Goſpel to him and his Houſe. And in general indeed in all Caſes of Importance and Difficulty, it has been the Practice of the Church to join Faſting to their Prayers in their Addreſſes to Almighty God. As for to implore God's Direction in any Buſineſs; his Bleſſing on any Undertaking; the turning away of any Judgment either already inflicted or only threatned; and divers other ſuch pious Uſes and Occaſions.

Before I leave this Deſcription of religious Faſts and the Uſes of them, it will be very proper I think to add ſomething likewiſe concerning the Abuſes which have crept into this Part of Religion on purpoſe that we may avoid them. 1. One great Abuſe of them has

has been the ſeparating from them the internal Devotion and Repentance, and ſo making them really no more than a little bodily Penance. And therefore that Exhortation in the Prophet is exceeding neceſſary, (a) *Rent your Hearts and not your Garments.* There is no Faſt more declaimed againſt by the ſacred Writers than this. Hear what the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaith of it, *Iſ.* lviii. 5. *Is it ſuch a Faſt that I have choſen? a Day for a Man to afflict his Soul? is it to bow down his Head as a Bullruſh, and to ſpread Sack-cloth and Aſhes under him? wilt thou call this a Faſt and an acceptable Day to the Lord?* Wherever a Faſt is not joined with a real Sorrow for Sin, and a true Reſolution of Amendment of Life, it is not that religious Faſt which God requires: As it there follows. *Is not this the Faſt that I have choſen? to looſe the Bands of Wickedneſs, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every Yoke? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are caſt out to thy Houſe? when thou ſeeſt the Naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyſelf from thine own Fleſh?* Now from this Deſcription we may learn that Faſting is not ſo much a Mortification of the Body, as of the Mind; and an Abſtinence from Sin as well as from Meat and Drink, and

(a) Joel ii. 13.

that

that when it is of the right Stamp, it is always joined with true Repentance. 2. Another great Abuſe of Faſting is the employing it to ſinful Purpoſes; for we are not to believe that Faſting ſanctifies the Cauſe; but that it is the Cauſe which ſanctifies Faſting. (a) *Behold ye faſt for Strife and Debate, and to ſmite with the Fiſt of Wickedneſs*; ſays the ſame Prophet; from whence we may learn that Faſting joined with Oppreſſion, or Rebellion, or applied to ſupport any other evil Courſe is not a religious Faſt. 3. Neither is that the right Faſt which is made uſe of out of Parſimony and Penuriouſneſs. For one Part of the Deſcription of the Faſt which God hath choſen is *To deal our Bread to the Hungry, and that we bring the Poor that are caſt out to our Houſe; when we ſee the Naked that we cover him, and that we hide not ourſelves from our own Fleſh.* In ſhort, what we ſave by Faſting, we ſhould lay out in Charity over and above our uſual Allowances that Way. 4. A moſt notorious Abuſe of Faſting, and what has indeed totally changed the Nature and Deſign of it, is inſtead of a total Abſtinence, only changing the Diet, as they do in the Church of *Rome*, abſtaining from Fleſh, but on their faſting Days eating to the full of Fiſh, and all other ſorts of Rarities. But to do Juſtice to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, there

(a) Iſ. lviii. 4.

are

are ſeveral of theſe Abuſes of the Duty of Faſting, which it ſeems they were not guilty of at that Time, for all that our Saviour faults in them with relation to their Faſting was, that they faſted out of Vanity and Oſtentation. Which leads me to

II. The ſecond Thing I obſerved in the Words: Namely, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, their Abuſe of the Duty of Faſting to the Ends of Hypocriſy, Pride and Vanity. *When ye faſt be not as the Hypocrites, of a ſad Countenance: For they diſfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to faſt. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their Reward.* In theſe Words we have both the Deſcription and Condemnation of Hypocriſy.

The Deſcription of it; it is an Oſtentation of Religion, and the Condemnation of it is in Chriſt's Aſſeveration that they have their Reward, that is, that the popular Applauſe, and the other worldly Advantages of Hypocriſy, is all the Reward they ſhall have for their Pains; there is no Reward to be expected in the future State, for ſuch Services as are performed not with an Eye to God, but Man. As to this Deſcription of Hypocriſy, it will hold in all the Parts of Religion. Our Saviour has already cautioned us againſt it as to our Righteouſneſs or Duty in general; as to Alms, Prayer, and now Faſting in particular. From all which we may gather both the Certainty of the Deſcription,

tion, and the great Danger of this Oſtentation in Religion, being ſo frequently cautioned againſt it. In the Vice here deſcribed there is a great Mixture of ill Things; from the Conſideration of which, it will be no hard Matter to ſee the Reaſon why our Lord does ſo frequently and ſo earneſtly diſſwade us from it. 1. There is a great deal of Diſingeniuty and Inſincerity in it, that a Man ſhould put on a Maſk, and never appear in his own true Colours. 2. That in order to this Maſk, he ſhould not be afraid to make uſe of ſuch a ſacred Thing as Religion; certainly no Man that believes any Thing of Religion would offer to pervert it to ſo bad an Uſe; and therefore in all Appearance the Hypocrite muſt not be far from an Atheiſt. 3. Another Ingredient in this Vice is Pride and Vanity; the Affectation to be ſeen of Men, eſpecially when Religion is in Vogue and Requeſt; there being no better Way then, to procure and eſtabliſh a Reputation in the World than by being reckoned extremely zealous for extraordinary Piety. 4. Covetouſneſs and divers other Vices may lurk under this Cloak of Hypocriſy. We are told elſewhere of (*a*) *Their making long Prayers that they might devour Widows Houſes*; and it is plain under the ſame Cloak they might have the better Opportunity of compaſſing ſeve-

(*a*) Mat. xxiii. 14.

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ral other Deſigns of Ambition, Cruelty, ſecret Luſt, or the like.

As to the Danger of this Vice we learn it from our Saviour's Aſſeveration, *Verily, I ſay unto you they have their Reward*; q. d. The worldly Ends they attain, are all the Reward they are like to have; as their Religion is only calculated for a preſent End, they ſhall ſo find it in the future State, where all their Masks ſhall be pulled off and Hypocriſy ſhall be detected and puniſhed. This is the beſt Cure for Hypocriſy, the Conſideration that it will never paſs muſter in the future State. Alas! what ſignifies a little Wealth, or a little Applauſe in this World? How ſhort-lived are they, and how little ſolid Satisfaction will they yield, when the Soul moſt wants Comfort?

III. So now I am come to the third and laſt Thing in the Words, namely, our Saviour's Direction and Encouragement to the contrary Exerciſe of Humility, Secrecy, and Sincerity in the Practice of the Duty of faſting: *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine Head, and waſh thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in Secret; and thy Father which ſeeth in Secret, ſhall reward thee openly.* Where firſt he directs the cutting off all the Ways and Methods of Hypocriſy, *Anoint thine Head, and waſh thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to faſt.* When once we become acquainted with the Devices of Satan, the beſt way

way is to countermine him, and to keep out of the way of his Temptations. We would think, that know nothing of the Cuſtoms of the *Jews*, that our Saviour adviſes us here to keep ſo far from the Temptation, that we ſhould rather run into the contrary Extreme; but when we conſider that the *Jews* ordinarily anointed their Head, except on the Days of Mourning, then we muſt conclude that the Meaning of this Direction is no more, than that we ſhould put on the ſame Looks and Habit on the Days of our private faſting as at other times. Let us avoid all Signs and Appearances of Oſtentation of our religious Services; let us be ſo far from that, that Men ſhall not ſo much as know what we are about: And if poſſible let us have no more Eyes upon us but only God's, and he who is the ſecret Witneſs of our Devotion and other religious Exerciſes will reward us openly. This Direction, as I take it, is much to the ſame purpoſe, with that general Direction of avoiding all the Occaſions of Sins, we are in all Actions that we go about, to conſider as near as we can what it is that adds Fuel to our Luſt, or our Pride, or Vanity, or Covetouſneſs, or Paſſion and Reſentment; and it is good Chriſtian Prudence to cut off all thoſe Occaſions or Temptations to Sin; as in the Caſe before us, our good Works taking air and being made publick is the Thing from whence our Pride is moſt like to receive its Nouriſhment; therefore the beſt way to obviate this Temptation

is, to prevent if poſſible, their being made publick, by ſtudying ſuch a Modeſty in the doing of them, that, as it was ſaid on another Occaſion, *our left Hand ſhall not know what our right Hand doth.* And to encourage us to this, we have a Doctrine here laid down, which, if we believed and conſidered it, would make us very careful to do all our good Actions with a ſingle Eye to God, that is, that the leſs Encouragement we have to our good Actions from Men, we ſhall have ſo much the more from our heavenly Father. But two Things are required to be believed in order to this Doctrine, *viz.* That God now ſees all that we do in ſecret, and that he will afterwards make a ſuitable and open Recompence. But I am perſwaded moſt Sinners believe neither of theſe; for if they throughly believed either that they are under God's Eye for all their ſecreteſt Actions and cloſeſt Contrivances, or that ever there will be a Day of Retribution, they would certainly live quite other ſort of Lives than they do. Had we half that Regard for God that Children have for their Parents, or Servants for their Maſters, or Scholars for their Teachers, we ſhould not have ſuch Doings in the World as we have. Let us learn to have an Eye to that Recompence of Reward, firmly to believe it in our Hearts, and to fix it in our Minds by frequent Meditation, and it will undoubtedly have a greater Influence on our Life and Actions.

Having

Having thus ſpoke to the Particulars of the Text I ſhall add ſomething briefly by way of Application.

1. And firſt, let us examine whether in this Particular of Faſting our Righteouſneſs exceeds that of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. The *Phariſees* were a ſtrict Sect in this Matter of Faſting. *The Diſciples of* John *and of the* Phariſees *faſted often* we are told, and the *Phariſee* made his boaſt that *he faſted twice in the Week*. Now we do not find that our Saviour ever faulted this Practice of theirs, except for their boaſting of it. And even here in my Text, though for ſeveral good Reaſons he would not preſcribe when or how often we ſhould faſt, Health and other Things being to be conſulted for the deciding of that Queſtion; yet he ſuppoſed we would comply with it as a Duty; only he commanded us when we faſt, to avoid Hypocriſy. But alas! we have found out a new Way of avoiding the Hypocriſy which was then incident to this Duty, by leaving the Duty wholly undone; in which I think there is no manner of Queſtion but that the Righteouſneſs of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* exceeds ours: As indeed I am afraid it does in the two other Particulars of Alms and Prayer too. And here now I find myſelf obliged to confute a lazy Opinion of ſome, as if Faſting were now altogether out of Doors among Chriſtians. It is true indeed the Chriſtian Religion lays no ſuch ſtreſs upon it as the *Phariſees* did; for our

Saviour did not think fit to burden his weak Diſciples at firſt with this Piece of Auſterity; he did not deſign they ſhould faſt (*a*) *While he the Bridegroom was with them*: But at the ſame Time he foretold, *When the Bridegroom ſhould be taken from them, then they ſhould faſt in thoſe Days.* It is true likewiſe that the Chriſtian Religion places no Duty in eating or not eating. (*b*) *For neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we eat not are we the worſe.* The whole Buſineſs of eating or not eating is to be meaſured by the Tendency which it has to make us good or bad, better or worſe. So that every one is to examine his own State and Circumſtances, in order to the finding out whether a total Abſtinence proves more conducive to his mortifying his Luſts, and a readier Help to Prayer and Repentance, than a continual ſober and moderate Diet, and direct his Practice accordingly. Yet that our Religion ſpeaks moſt honourably of faſting as a good Inſtrument of Mortification ſeems evident from the following Particulars. 1. That it is a Part of natural Religion, not being enjoined by God in the moral Law, and yet frequently in uſe upon all great Occaſions above mentioned; upon occaſion of God's Judgments upon the Land, *Joel* i. 14. they are called upon *To ſanctify a Faſt, and to call a ſolemn Aſſembly.*

(*a*) Mat ix. 15. (*b*) 1. Cor. viii. 8.

Thus

Thus the *Jews* faſted three Days when they were decreed to be cut off by the Contrivance of *Haman*, *Eſth.* iv. ſo likewiſe they faſted to beg Pardon for their Sins and reform them, 1. *Sam.* vii. 5, 6. where they repent of their Idolatry. So they faſted to beg ſpecial Mercies of God; thus *Ezra* and his Company faſted to ſeek of God a right Way. *Ezr.* viii. 21. Theſe Faſts when rightly gone about are called *The Faſts which God hath choſen*, Iſ. lviii. 5. and *an acceptable Day unto the Lord.* Theſe are Examples of publick Faſts, obſerved with good Succeſs. We find likewiſe that voluntary private Faſts were in uſe with good People as their Occaſions required. David *wept and humbled his Soul with Faſting.* Pſ. lxix. 10. *Nehemiah* faſted when he heard of the Affliction of the People at *Jeruſalem*, *Neh.* i. 4. and *Daniel* ix. 3. And divers Inſtances we have of this godly Practice in the New Teſtament. *Anna* the Propheteſs faſted and prayed Night and Day. Our Saviour in my Text teaches the right Way of faſting and promiſes God's Reward to it. And *Mat.* xvii. 21. he tells his Diſciples of ſome Devils *That could not be caſt out but by Prayer and Faſting.* And that our Saviour's Apoſtles and Diſciples had the ſame good Opinion of the Efficacy of Faſting, as a ſpecial Means to obtain God's Bleſſing appears from their Practice. It was uſually joined with their Ordinations as we may ſee *Act.* xiv. 23. And with their extraordinary Miſ-

ſions. *Act.* xiii. 2, 3. St. *Paul* tells us that he was *in Faſtings often* 2. *Cor.* xi. 27. and among the other Hardſhips he had voluntarily underwent, Afflictions, Neceſſities, Diſtreſſes, Stripes, Impriſonments, Tumults, Labours, Watchings, he reckons up Faſtings too, as ſo many Proofs of his Diligence in his miniſterial Office. From all which and a great deal more which might be quoted, it appears that Faſting was always in high eſteem among Chriſtians: And therefore there is great Occaſion to exhort you to revive the Practice of it.

2. But if every one can't bear the Rigour of Faſting, and therefore if it is a Duty much left to Diſcretion, there is another Duty of great Affinity with it, which our Saviour enjoins ſtrictly to all Perſons, and at all Times; namely, Temperance in eating and drinking. *Take heed to your ſelves*, ſays he, Luk. xxi. 34. *leſt at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life, and ſo that Day come upon you unawares.* It is ſo much the more neceſſary to put you in mind of this Caution of our Saviour's becauſe the contrary Vices of Luxury, Intemperance and Drunkenneſs prevail too much in the World, and have too great an Influence upon us, to hinder that Seriouſneſs and Conſideration which is neceſſary to make Religion ſink down into our Hearts, and fructify in our Lives; and likewiſe prompt us to many raſh Reſolutions, Words and Actions, and drive

drive us upon many Temptations, which by Temperance and Sobriety we might eaſily avoid.

Now God give us all Grace, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we may live ſoberly, as well as righteouſly and godly in this preſent World: Looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

To him with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be all Praiſe.

SERMON XIII.

MAT. VI. 19.

Lay not up for yourſelves Treaſures upon Earth, *where Moth and Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and ſteal.*

V. 20. **But lay up for yourſelves Treaſures in Heaven,** *where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor ſteal.*

V. 22. *For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.*

V. 22. *The Light of the Body is the Eye; if therefore thine Eye be ſingle, thy whole Body ſhall be full of Light.* V. 23.

V. 23. *But if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body ſhall be full of Darkneſs; if therefore the Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs!*

V. 24. *No Man can ſerve two Maſters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other: Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.*

V. 25. *Therefore I ſay unto you, take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on; is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?*

V. 26. *Behold the Fowls of the Air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

V. 27. *Which of you by taking Thought, can add one Cubit unto his Stature?*

V. 28. *And why take ye Thought for Raiment? Conſider the Lillies of the Field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin.* V. 29. *And*

V. 29. *And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe.*

V. 30. *Wherefore if God ſo cloath the Graſs of the Field, which to Day is, and to Morrow is caſt into the Oven; ſhall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith.*

V. 31. *Therefore take no Thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithall ſhall we be cloathed.*

V. 32. *(For after all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.*

V. 33. *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.*

V. 34. *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow; for the Morrow ſhall take Thought for the Things of itſelf: ſufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.*

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

OUR

OUR bleſſed Saviour goes on here in the Proſecution of the ſame Deſign, training up his Diſciples to higher Degrees of Virtue, than had been taught by the *Jewiſh* Doctors. In the former Part of this Chapter, he had guarded them againſt the Sin of Pride and Oſtentation in all religious Duties; and now from hence, to the End of the Chapter, he guards them likewiſe againſt Covetouſneſs, which was another cloſe Vice of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, which it ſeems in many Things they approved of, at leaſt neglected to principle their Diſciples againſt it. Our Saviour handles this Subject at large, for ſixteen Verſes together, giving us many Characters of the *covetous* Man, with ſeveral Arguments to diſſwade us from *Covetouſneſs*, and the inordinate Cares of the World. And it is no wonder he has taken all this Pains to principle us well againſt a Vice, which tho it is as pernicious as any other whatſoever, yet is often diſguiſed under the ſpecious Shew of Temperance, Sobriety, Diligence, Frugality, Providence, and Care of Wife and Children, and ſeveral other very laudable Practices; by virtue of which, it inſinuates itſelf with greater Advantage than moſt other Vices, and is much harder to be diſcovered and guarded

guarded againſt. I thought once to have conſidered all our Saviour's Characters and Deſcriptions of this Vice by themſelves, before I had come to his Arguments and Diſſwaſives againſt it. But ſince he interſperſes the one with the other, I think it is my Part not to alter his Method, but to ſpeak to the Words as they lie before us: by clearing up the Deſcriptions of that Vice, and opening the Arguments made uſe of to dehort us from it, in the ſame Method in which they are here propoſed.

To begin then, in the Words which I have read, we may obſerve theſe three Things.

I. A Character of the covetous Man; which is, that he *lays up for himſelf Treaſures upon Earth, and not in Heaven.*

II. Our Saviour's Diſſwaſive from this Practice; *Lay not up for yourſelves Treaſures upon Earth, but lay up for yourſelves Treaſures in Heaven.*

III. The Reaſons of this Exhortation; which are three, *viz.* That it is but an earthly Treaſure. And 2. liable to periſhing by diverſe Accidents, ſuch as Moth and Ruſt, which corrupt it; and Thieves that break through and ſteal it; whereas the heavenly Treaſure is ſecure, and out of the Reach of theſe, and all other Accidents whatſoever. And 3. That if our Treaſures are upon Earth, they will draw

draw our Hearts after them, and make them earthly too.

I. I begin with the Character of the *covetous* Man, which is that he *lays up for himſelf Treaſures upon Earth, and not in Heaven.* For underſtanding of which Way of ſpeaking, I muſt acquaint you with an uſual Hebraiſm, very common in the Holy Scripture-Stile; the Conſideration of which, is of great Uſe towards the underſtanding of this, and diverſe other Texts, which would be apt to puzzle an ordinary Reader. For it is a common Thing in Hebrew, of two Things which they mean only to compare together, and to prefer the one to the other, inſtead of that to bring them in by way of Antitheſis, and to reject or prohibit the one, and chuſe the other. As in that Expreſſion, *Hoſ.* vi. 6. *I deſire Mercy and not Sacrifice:* The Deſign was not abſolutely to condemn Sacrifices, (for God had commanded them) but only to prefer Mercy before them. So *Gen.* xlv. 8. *Joſeph* ſays to his Brethren, *It was not you that ſent me hither, but God.* And *Exod.* xvi. 8. *Moſes* tells the People, *Your Murmurings are not againſt us, but againſt the Lord.* So *Prov.* viii. 10. *Receive my Inſtruction, and not Silver,* is to be interpreted in a comparative Senſe, as it follows immediately, *and Knowledge rather than choice Gold.* In the ſame Senſe it is ſaid; *Joel.* ii. 13. *Rent your Heart, and not your Garments.* Now this ſame Stile is continued in the New Teſtament,

as

as *John* vi. 27. *Labour not for the Meat which periſheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlaſting Life:* The Meaning is only, that we ſhould not labour ſo much for Things temporal, as for Things eternal. So *Luke* xii. 4. *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, but fear him who after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell*; where the Meaning is only, that God is much more to be feared than Men. So *Col.* iii. 2. *Set your Affection on Things above, not on Things on the Earth*; meaning only that we ſhould much more ſet our Affection on Things above, than on Things on Earth. So when our Saviour ſays, *John* vii. 16. *My Doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me*; it is not deſigned for an abſolute Denial that the Doctrine was his, but only that the Honour of it is more owing to God. Now according to this Style, and Manner of ſpeaking, the Words of my Text are to be underſtood, not for a total Prohibition of laying up any Treaſure upon Earth, but only that we ſhould be infinitely more careful to lay up Treaſures in Heaven than upon Earth.

The Words being thus explained, let us conſider more particularly what it is that is here faulted by laying up our Treaſures on Earth, not in Heaven. To this I ſhall anſwer as diſtinctly as I can.

Firſt, Negatively, It is not every laying up of an Eſtate for our future Occaſions, that is here prohibited; there being many honeſt juſt Cauſes for ſo doing; ſuch as the laying in, in Crop-time and Harveſt,

Harveſt, the Fruits of the Ground, upon which we muſt ſubſiſt all the Year following. And if in a Year of Plenty, we ſhould lay up for a Year of Scarcity, this would be no unlawful or diſcommendable Action. Or if Parents ſhould lay up ſomething in reaſon for their Children, or Huſbands for their Wives; or if Huſbandmen, Merchants, or any others, whoſe uſeful Callings can't be well managed without a conſiderable Stock, ſhould accordingly lay in ſuch a Stock, I do not apprehend that there is any Thing in our Saviour's Doctrine to prohibit ſuch Proviſions, if the Perſon's Circumſtances will bear them, without neglecting any Duty of Juſtice or Charity in the mean time, and without ſetting their Hearts too much on theſe their worldly Callings or Projections. Nay further, we are commanded to lay up ſomething, not only for a decent Supply of our own Wants, but likewiſe for the Relief of others. 1 *Theſ.* iv. 11, 12. We are exhorted to a Diligence in our Callings, that *We may walk decently toward them that are without, and may have lack of nothing.* And *Eph.* iv. 28. We are exhorted to the ſame Diligence, *That we may have to give to him that needeth.* For tho it ſeems to be here poſitively forbidden, that we ſhould *lay up for ourſelves Treaſures upon Earth,* yet according to the Way of interpreting ſuch like Expreſſions, as ye have heard, it is no abſolute Prohibition of the one, tho it is a more earneſt commanding of the other. So much for what is not prohibited by this Expreſſion.

Secondly,

Secondly, But now let us next enquire affirmatively, what is here prohibited: And briefly there are theſe two Things ſeem to me to be here condemned.

1. The heaping up an unreaſonable Quantity of worldly Wealth.

2. The ſetting of our Heart and Affection too much upon our worldly Eſtate or Treaſure.

1. The heaping up an unreaſonable Quantity of worldly Wealth. For tho the preciſe Quantity of worldly Eſtate, which Men may purchaſe, or lay up, is not determined, nor indeed can be, their Occaſions and Circumſtances being ſo vaſtly different; yet there are many good general Rules ſet down, which, if duly obſerved, would keep our Eſtates, and Stocks, and Treaſures in this World, within due Bounds; any one of which good Rules being tranſgreſſed, we fall within the Prohibition of my Text, of ſinful or unreaſonable laying up of Treaſure upon Earth. The chief of theſe Rules I ſhall briefly mention, without ſtaying to prove and demonſtrate them, eſpecially where they are, (as I think moſt of them are) pretty ſelf evident.

(1.) The firſt Rule I ſhall mention to this Purpoſe, ſhall be this; That what we get, we acquire it by fair, juſt, and equitable Ways and Means, without Fraud, Oppreſſion, Exaction, or any other indirect Way, diſhoneſt in itſelf, or injurious to our Neighbour. This is a Rule which demonſtrates itſelf,

itſelf, being founded on the firſt common Principles of Juſtice and Honeſty.

(2.) The ſecond Rule I ſhall mention, is, that as to the uſe of our Wealth, we be not of a narrow, pinching, and penurious Temper, but that *our Converſation be without Covetouſneſs*; that we live decently, beſtowing the Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of Life upon ourſelves, and Friends, and Families, with ſuch a Generoſity and Hoſpitality as is ſuitable to our Eſtate and Circumſtances. As the other Rule was founded on a Principle of Juſtice, ſo this is founded on a Principle of Honour and Decency.

(3.) The third Rule ſhall be, that we gather not ſo great Eſtates, as in the Management of them, require our Hearts and Minds to be ſo entangled with the Cares of the World, as to be thereby too much diverted from minding the Concerns of our Souls, and a better Life. This is a Rule, the Reaſonableneſs of which will not be doubted by any who believe any thing of Religion or a future State. Our better Part ought to be chiefly minded, and Eternity is much to be preferred to this ſhort Life.

(4) A fourth Rule is, that we be always willing and ready, according to our Ability, and the Opportunities God puts into our Hands, to do good in Works of Piety and Charity, and in promoting the publick Good of the World, eſpecially that Part of it where God caſts our Lot. This is likewiſe ſo

rational a Rule, that Willingneſs ſhould attend the Ability in doing good, and in proportion to it; that in Morals it is as good as a Demonſtration.

(5.) A fifth Rule to moderate our Deſires after, and Acquiſitions of the World, is, that we ſtudy a Contentment with our own Lot and Circumſtances, and learn to be eaſy in a low Fortune; which will cure us of that Covetouſneſs and Ambition, which continually puſh us on to an inſatiable Thirſt after more.

(6.) The laſt Rule ſhall be, that having ſufficient wherewithal to anſwer our juſt Occaſions, we ſet ſome Bounds to our laying up of earthly Treaſure, and to the encreaſing of our Purchaſes, and deviſe liberally how to do good with the Overplus. This Rule I have from St. *Paul*, for he (*a*) *charges them who are rich in this World, to be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.*

Theſe are ſhort and plain Rules for regulating our worldly Purchaſes and Eſtates; for certainly he minds, and lays up Treaſure upon Earth too much, who either gets it by unfair and indirect Means; or has not the Heart to lay it out to ſupply his own Occaſions, and the Occaſions of thoſe whom he ought to provide for; or who has his Thoughts

(*a*) 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

and

and Time too much employed in the Cares of the World, to the Neglect of better Things; or is backward and averſe from Works of Piety, Charity, and the publick Good; or who is diſcontented with his own Circumſtances, and envious of his Neighbour's; or, laſtly, who flowing in Wealth already, thinks he is never to ſtop; but inſtead of contriving liberal Things for the Good of his Neighbours, and the World, thinks only *of joining Houſe to Houſe, and Field to Field*, till he has ſhoved out all his Neighbours from about him, and is left alone in the midſt of the Land. So much for the firſt Thing here faulted and prohibited, namely, the heaping up an unreaſonable Quantity of worldly Wealth.

2. The other Thing here faulted, is the ſetting of our Heart and Affection too much on our worldly Eſtate and Treaſure. It is not only, nor ſo much indeed the Quantity of the Treaſure, as the immoderate Degree of Affection we ſet upon it, which our Saviour here taxes, as appears from what he ſays at *ver.* 21. *For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.* If our Hearts then are chiefly ſet upon our earthly Treaſures, it is the ſureſt Sign we are guilty of what our Saviour here prohibits. But now becauſe a little Self-Flattery, of which all Men have good Store, is able to hide, and palliate all the Vices of the Heart; in order to the Trial and Examination of our own Hearts in this Matter, it will be neceſſary that we take help from a few Rules, whereby we may diſcover

whether our Hearts are immoderately ſet on the World, or no. I ſhall but juſt mention them, leaving the Trial and Experiment to yourſelves.

(1.) Firſt then, our Hearts are too much ſet on the World, if we are ſtrongly bent and reſolved to be rich; if in our Hearts we earneſtly graſp the World, and eagerly wiſh and deſire it: *They that will be rich*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. *fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition.* As to Riches, we ſhould endeavour to keep our Minds in an even well poiſed Temper, ready and prepared for whatſoever outward State and Condition it ſhall pleaſe God to carve out for us; and to have our Hearts diſentangled from the Love of the World, which, as I formerly explained, is the Meaning of the firſt *Beatitude*, *Poverty in Spirit*: So that if we are literally *poor*, we be contented; and if *rich*, that our Hearts do not cleave to our Riches; but that we be ready to part with them when God calls, or to employ them in doing good.

(2.) Our Hearts are too much ſet on the World, if we make too much haſte to be rich. *He that maketh haſte to be rich, ſhall not be innocent*, ſaith Solomon, *Prov* xxviii. 20. So that a Diſcontent with low Circumſtances, and an Impatience to grow rich, is a certain Sign of an Heart cleaving to the World.

(3.) It is a Sign that our Hearts are too much ſet on the World, if we look on our Neighbour's Thriving

Thriving and Proſperity with Envy and Diſcontent.

(4.) It is a Sign of an Heart too much ſet on the World, when we contemplate our own Wealth and flouriſhing Circumſtances with too much Complacence and Delight. Good Men delight themſelves in God, but worldly Men have Gladneſs in their Hearts, chiefly when their Corn, and Wine, and Oil, their Stocks, and Crops, and all worldly Things are encreaſed.

(5.) It is a great Sign of an Heart too much ſet on the World, when we come to put our Truſt and Confidence in our Wealth; like the rich Man in the Goſpel, who truſted more in his full Barns than in God.

(6.) It is a certain Sign that our Hearts are too much ſet on the World, when our Time, Thoughts, Projects, and Contrivances, are ſpent chiefly on worldly Things, to the Neglect of our Souls, and the Concerns of a better Life.

(7) It is a Sign our Hearts are too much ſet on the World, when upon any great Loſſes, or even Poverty itſelf coming upon us, we grow angry, peeviſh, and diſcontented. For if the World were not too deeply rooted in our Hearts, we could eaſily part with it at God's Pleaſure: We could ſay with holy *Job*, (a) *The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* Or with

(a) Job i. 21.

St. *Paul*, (a) *I have learned in whatſoever State I am, therewith to be content; I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am inſtructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to ſuffer Need.*

(8.) Laſtly, it is a moſt certain Sign that our Hearts are too much ſet on the World, whenever, to ſave or encreaſe our Wealth, or outward Eſtate, we betray our Duty and Conſcience. As St. *Paul* obſerves, 1 *Tim.* vi. 10. *The Love of Money*, ſays he, *is the Root of all Evil; which while ſome coveted after, they have erred*; or (as it is in the Margin of our Bibles) *have been ſeduced from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through with many Sorrows.* An Example of which Defection, on account of this inordinate Love of the World, he gives him elſewhere in *Demas*, 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas hath forſaken me*, ſaith he, *having loved this preſent World.*

What has been ſaid, may ſuffice, as to that Part of the covetous Man's Character, that he lays up for himſelf Treaſures upon Earth. It will be requiſite likewiſe to add a little for underſtanding the other Part of his Character, *that he lays not up for himſelf Treaſures in Heaven.* Now in order to this, we muſt firſt conſider what is meant by *laying up for ourſelves Treaſures in Heaven*; then we ſhall

(a) Phil. iv. 11.

eaſily

eaſily ſee how negligent the covetous Man is in this Matter.

Treaſures in Heaven, are ſuch Treaſures as will turn to account there; and we are then ſaid to lay up our Treaſures in Heaven, when we lay out our Wealth or other Talents ſo, as that we may have the Benefit of them in that bleſſed Life to come. To give an Example in Wealth; what a Man lays out in Husbandry or Merchandize, or puts into any Bank from whence he expects a worldly Profit, all that is in order to encreaſe his earthly Store or Treaſure; but what a Man lays out in Works of Piety and Charity, without any Deſign of worldly Advantage to himſelf, but purely out of Love to God and his Neighbour, with an Eye to God's Promiſes of future Reward, all this is Treaſure laid up in Heaven; a Bank of all other the richeſt, and ſecureſt, and which turns to the beſt account. The ſame may be ſaid of all our other Talents; for according to the ſeveral Uſes we put them to, and the different Aims and Deſigns we have by them, we lay them up either in the earthly, or the heavenly Treaſure. So that towards *laying up of Treaſures in Heaven*, there ſeem to be only theſe two Things requiſite; firſt, That we have a firm Perſwaſion and Belief of the Goodneſs of this *heavenly Treaſure*; that is, that it is ſecure, and that what is put into it, will turn to the beſt account. And then, that upon this Perſwaſion we do all the good we can, from no other Proſpect, but of a Reward in Ha-

ven. For if we do good only, or chiefly for worldly Ends, this is a laying up in the earthly, not in the heavenly Treaſure.

Now it is plain the covetous Man fails in both theſe Reſpects; he has no Eſteem of the heavenly Security, at leaſt little minds or conſiders it. And he is ſo bent upon encreaſing his earthly Store, that he ventures little or nothing into the heavenly.

Thus now I have conſidered the firſt Thing I propoſed from the Words, namely, the Character here given of the *covetous Man*, that he lays up for himſelf Treaſures upon Earth, and not in Heaven. Time will not allow my handling the other Particulars, which I ſhall therefore refer to another Opportunity. Only upon occaſion of what has been now ſaid, let me ſeriouſly exhort you all to take care ſo to employ your Wealth, and all your other Talents, to ſuch Purpoſes, and in ſuch a Manner, that they may turn to good account in Heaven. For tho, as the Words have been explained, I muſt not diſcourage you from laying up of this World's Goods, as far as your own, or your Families juſt Occaſions do require; yet I am obliged to put you frequently in mind of what is of infinitely greater Conſequence, the laying up for yourſelves Treaſures in Heaven, by employing your Wealth, your Honour, your Power, your Intereſt, your Learning, Wit, Induſtry, and all your Talents, for doing good; for that will turn to your everlaſting Benefit. Ye know the Account

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we have of the Proceedings in the great Day of Judgment, in the 25th Chapter of this Goſpel, and the noble Rewards there aſſigned to them who ſhall be found to have ſhewn Acts of Charity to Chriſt's poor Members. What we add to our Eſtates upon Earth, can turn but to little account, becauſe at beſt we are to have the Uſe of it but for a ſhort Time, the Time of this preſent Life: But what we lay up in Heaven by our Works of Faith, and Labours of Love and Charity, and Patience of Hope, and Fervency of Prayer, and Diligence in all manner of Chriſtian Duty; every good Action we do with an Eye to Heaven, howſoever worthleſs in itſelf, yet through the Merits of Chriſt, and the Mercy of God graciouſly accepting it, ſhall be richly rewarded in Heaven with Joys eternal, unſpeakable, and full of Glory. God give us all Grace to believe this, and to practice according to this Belief, and to perſevere in this holy Practice to the end; till at laſt we are made Partakers of this bleſſed State, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake.

To whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON XIV.

MAT. VI. 19.

Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth, **where Moth and Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and ſteal.**

V. 20. *But lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven,* **where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor ſteal.**

V. 21. **For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.**

The Second Sermon on this Text.

AT the laſt Occaſion I explained the Meaning of theſe Words, and then obſerved in them theſe three Things.

I. A Character of a worldly or covetous Man, which is, that he lays up for himſelf Treaſures upon Earth, and not in Heaven. II. Our

II. Our Saviour's Diſſwaſive from this Practice; *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth, but lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven.*

III. The Reaſons of this Exhortation, which are three. *Viz.* (1.) That the one is an earthly, the other an heavenly Treaſure. (2.) That the one is liable to periſhing by divers Accidents, ſuch as Moth and Ruſt which corrupt it, and Thieves that break through and ſteal it; whereas the other is ſecure, out of the reach of theſe and all other Accidents whatſoever. (3.) That if our Treaſures are upon Earth, they will draw our Hearts after them, and make them earthly too.

As to the firſt of theſe, the Character of the covetous Man, that he lays up Treaſures for himſelf upon Earth and not in Heaven, having conſidered it at the laſt Occaſion, I ſhall not ſpend Time about it, but proceed directly to the ſecond and third.

II. The ſecond Thing in the Words is our Saviour's Diſſuaſive from this Practice of the covetous Man. *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth; but lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven.* Now having formerly explained what is to be meant by *Laying up our Treaſures upon Earth*, and what by *Laying them up in Heaven*, that which is properly incumbent upon us on this Head is,

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to ſhew you how it is the particular Duty of Chriſtians not to lay out their Time and Talents on *earthly*, but on *heavenly Treaſures*. Alas! to what purpoſe was it, that ever Heaven was diſcovered? Was it to be read and talked of like a Romance, only to divert and amuſe us a little, and to have no Influence on our Lives and Converſations? If we believe it not, then let us not pretend to be Chriſtians. We are then of no higher a Diſpenſation than thoſe *Jews*, to whom our Saviour was now preaching, who expected a Meſſiah that would be a great earthly Prince, and would make all his Followers great and rich; inſtead of a Chriſt that would teach them to wean their Hearts from the World, and prepare them for Heaven. This we are to look upon as one of the principal Characters of a good Chriſtian, that he truly believes and acts upon the Belief of a future State of Happineſs in Heaven: That every Step of his Life is in order to that bleſſed End of his Journey, and that all his Talents are laid out ſo, as to turn to good Account in Heaven. It is plain that both our Saviour and his Apoſtles being ſenſible how much we were byaſſed to the other Extream, did all that could be done both by their Doctrine and Example to wean our Hearts from the World, and to fix them on Heaven; as by an attentive reading of their Writings will every where appear. But I ſhall confine myſelf to the Text, and proceed to

III. The

III. The third Thing I obſerved in the Words, namely, the Reaſons of this Exhortation, which are three.

1. That the one is an *earthly*, the other an *heavenly Treaſure*.

2. That the one is liable to periſhing by divers Accidents, ſuch as *Moth and Ruſt which corrupt it*, and *Thieves that break through and ſteal it*; whereas the other is ſecure, out of the reach of theſe, and all other Accidents.

3. That if our Treaſures are upon Earth, they will draw our Hearts after them, and make them earthly too.

Firſt, The one is an *earthly*, the other an *heavenly Treaſure*. ThisNotion ſuggeſts ſeveral Things to our Conſideration tending to diſſwade us from this Practice. Particularly, 1. The groſs earthly Nature of theſe Bleſſings. Were we only ſenſual Creatures, and if the chief Part of our Duration were to be in this Life, then theſe worldly Things would be an adequate Good for the Soul of Man; but ſince neither in their Nature will they ſuit the Soul, which is created for better Things, nor in their Duration will they anſwer but to a ſmall Part of our Time, they can by no means deſerve much of our Time and Labour to be beſtowed upon them. A little of them will anſwer all our Occaſions, and much better indeed than a great deal, and therefore we ought not to chooſe our

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Treaſure of them. But theſe Things will require a little farther Explication. We are to conſider then that the Happineſs of any Creature reſults from the Suitableneſs of the Object to the Faculty. Some Things which extremely delight ſome Creatures would be a mighty Pain to others, nay would quite kill them. It is neceſſary then in order to Happineſs that there be a Suitableneſs between the Creature and the Object which it purſues, to make it happy in the Enjoyment of ſuch an Object. Man's Happineſs muſt conſiſt in theſe earthly Things, to make them ſuitable to him; for if he is a Creature capable of an higher Felicity than this World can afford, then that is what he ought chiefly to aim at, and ſeek after. We may as well think to make Fiſh feed upon Graſs and Corn, and Oxen live upon Water and Mud like Fiſh, as to make Man happy only with worldly Things. 2. But ſuppoſe they were ever ſo well fitted to make us happy during our Stay in this World; ſuppoſe they could cure all the Diſeaſes of the Mind, and ſupply all the Wants and Neceſſities of the Body; yet Man being made for an eternal, immortal Duration, how ſmall a Part of that is included in this preſent Life? He is the only wiſe and provident Man who is wiſe and provident to Eternity. Should we not deſervedly think him a great Fool, who to have his Bellyfull of all the moſt delicious Fare that Nature and Art could furniſh for one Day, would ſell himſelf into

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an hard Servitude, in which he ſhould be miſerably pinched with Hunger all the reſt of his Life? As fooliſh as this Bargain ſeems, it is a much more fooliſh Bargain they make, who take care only for this ſhort Part of our Time which we live in this World, and are to be miſerable to all Eternity. For one Day bears a greater Proportion to the reſt of our Life in this World, than this Life does to Eternity, which we are to provide for in the World to come. An earthly Treaſure then at beſt being but temporal, can never deſerve to have all our Care laid out upon it, or indeed the greater Part of our Care, when is but a mere Trifle, if put in the Scales againſt eternal Life. This may perhaps ſeem ſtrange Reaſoning to us, who have ſo great a Senſe of this preſent Life, and ſo little Senſe of that which is to come; but our Saviour who knew the true Worth of Things, had a much greater Senſe of the future State, and ſets a much greater Value upon it.

So much for our Saviour's firſt Reaſon concerning the Treaſure we ought to lay up; not an earthly one, as not being fitted in Nature, or Duration to an heavenly Mind, or a Being fitted for Immortality.

Secondly, His next Reaſon is, that the earthly Treaſure is liable to periſhing by divers Accidents, ſome native, breeding in itſelf, ſuch as *Moth* and *Ruſt* which corrupt it; ſome foreign, as *Thieves* that break through and ſteal it. The Word here

tranſlated

tranſlated *Ruſt* is by others tranſlated Smut; but it is uſed in the Original in a much wider Senſe than either of theſe Words will reach; namely, for every Thing that deſtroys and conſumes the Grain, as the Weavel, Worms and the like. Now for underſtanding this Part of our Saviour's Argument, it is well obſerved by ſome Interpreters that he touches here the ſeveral ſorts of Treaſures which they uſed to lay up, with the ſeveral Plagues that attend them. Their Treaſures were of three ſorts; *Clothes*, with which they had their Wardrobes well repleniſhed; *Grain*, which they laid up in their Barns and Granaries; and *Gold*, and Money and precious Stones, which they laid up in their Cheſts and Cabinets. Now all theſe were ſubject to divers Misfortunes which attended them. The Wardrobe was plagued with the *Moth*, which deſtroyed their fine Clothes; the Granary with the Weavel and Rats and Mice which eat and deſtroyed the Grain; and the Hoard of *Gold* and Money was a Temptation to *Thieves* to rob and ſteal it. Theſe are but Examples of the Accidents which happen to earthly Stores and Treaſures, and not deſigned for a full Enumeration of them: For indeed there are innumerable Accidents which deſtroy what Men ſet their Hearts on in this World: Fire, and Water, and the Sword of the Enemy; the Careleſneſs and Deceitfulneſs of Servants, Storms and Earthquakes, Oppreſſions, and Injuſtices, and a thouſand other Things more than I can enumerate.

rate. Yet our Saviour in the Inſtances which he brings, points at the chief of thoſe Plagues, to which moſt of the reſt may be reduced; for in *Moth* and *Ruſt* or Smut we have an Example of thoſe *Inward* Corruptions which breed in the Things themſelves; and of theſe there is an infinite Number. Then in *Thieves* we have an Example of the many external Enemies that aſſault our worldly Goods, whether by the way of Force and Violence, or by the way of Fraud and Knavery, or by the way of Exaction and Oppreſſion. In general all Things in this World are either ſo periſhable in their own Nature, or ſo ſubject to Caſualties from without, that we can promiſe ourſelves no ſure Poſſeſſion or Enjoyment of them.

Now the contrary of all this is true of thoſe Treaſures which we lay up in Heaven; for there, as our Saviour ſays, *Neither Moth nor Ruſt doth corrupt, nor do Thieves break through and ſteal.* Let us enquire a little into the Particulars.

(1.) *Heavenly Treaſures* are fitted for our Heaven-born Souls, they are ſuited to our Capacities, which find a true Pleaſure and Satisfaction in them. As the Needle touched with the Loadſtone is unquiet and reſtleſs till it turns to the *North* Pole, ſo the Soul of Man is reſtleſs and unquiet till it turns to God, and reſts upon him. And the Source of all its Unquietneſs is becauſe it is often drawn away from him, and bewitched with other Things, which are never able to ſatisfy its capacious Deſires. But

ſo ſoon as it fixes in the Love of God, it finds ſufficient to anſwer all its utmoſt Deſires. As it was ſaid of Adam, when all the Creatures were preſented to him, (a) *That there was not found a Help-meet for him*: So we may ſay of all this World's Goods, that there is not to be found a good Meet for Man. Give him the whole World, and he will want and long for ſomething beyond it.

(2.) *Heavenly Treaſures* laſt for ever. They are not calculated for a ſmall Part of our Time, but we ſhall enjoy them for ever and ever. This one Conſideration is what adds infinite Worth and Weight to theſe heavenly Treaſures beyond our earthly ones, that they will never fail us; and this we ſhall know, that they will never fail, and ſo ſhall be under no Fear or Apprehenſion of it. This is too high a Subject for any Mortal to undertake the Deſcription of; but ſo much we may eaſily apprehend, that there is no Compariſon between Treaſures upon Earth, which at beſt we ſhall enjoy only during this ſhort Life, and Treaſures in Heaven, which we ſhall enjoy for ever.

(3.) *Treaſures in Heaven* are ſubject to no Accidents, neither of inward Corruption, nor of external Violence. There is, neither *Moth* to corrupt, nor *Thief* to ſteal. Firſt, no inward Corruption. There are ſome Countreys where ſeveral noxious

(a) Gen. ii. 20.

and

and filthy Creatures can't live. But this is the only Place, free from all Corruption whatſoever. Here in this World we have hardly any ſincere Happineſs, without a great Mixture of Trouble and Sorrow. All the good Things in this World have their own Inconveniences annexed, and moſt of them ſuch as riſe out of the good Things themſelves; as naturally as *Moths* do in Cloth, and Weavels in Grain. And this is God's wiſe Contrivance to leſſen our Affection to them, while we know that we muſt both have a great deal of Uneaſineſs in the Poſſeſſion of them, and muſt quickly part with them, as having the Seeds of Corruption in themſelves. But becauſe God would have us purſue the heavenly Treaſure with the moſt enlarged Affections, he gives us thoſe Bleſſings without a Worm to corrupt them, without Sorrow to allay them. Secondly, as there is no inward Corruption in the heavenly Treaſures; ſo they are not capable of being taken from us by Fraud or Violence. The Malice of the Devil and wicked Men has no Power there, they cannot enter to diſturb it; and if they could, the Inhabitants of that bleſſed Place are temptation Proof; that there is not the leaſt fear their Treaſure can be taken from them.

Thirdly, So now I am come to the third Reaſon our Saviour gives, to diſſwade us from laying up our Treaſures upon Earth, and to perſwade us to lay them up in Heaven; namely, that that has an Influence on the whole Man to give him an earth-

ly, or an heavenly Tincture. *For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.* For apprehending the Force of this Argument, we are to conſider

I. The Influence our Treaſure has upon our Hearts, to draw them after it.

II. The Influence the Heart has on the whole Man to govern all our Thoughts, Words and Actions.

III. The Concluſion then, that the laying up our Treaſure on Earth makes us worldly, and forgetful of Heaven; and that the laying up our Treaſure in Heaven makes us of an heavenly Temper, and reforms the whole Heart and Life.

(1.) Let us conſider the Influence our Treaſure has upon our Hearts, to draw them after it. The Heart runs out naturally after that which it loves beſt; the *Ambitious* Man's Heart runs upon his Honours; the *Voluptuous* Man's upon his Pleaſures; the *Miſer's* upon his Bags; the *Scholar's* upon his Notions; and ſo every Man's to his particular Inclination. And what a Man amaſſes a great deal of, and hoards it up not with a Deſign to part with it, but to have his Satisfaction in the ſecret Contemplation of it, that infallibly draws his Heart and Thoughts after it. It is therefore a much more dangerous thing than we are aware of,

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to hoard up Treaſures in this World; for could that be done without the Mind's being carried after it, without its being diſturbed with Cares and Fears, and anxious Thoughts and Concerns, without putting that Hope and Truſt in it, all which follow the chief Bent and Inclination of the Heart, then indeed it might be a much more innocent Thing to lay up Treaſures upon Earth; but when the Doing of this is ſo apt to draw the Heart after it, there's the Danger that theſe our earthly Treaſures will draw away our Heart from God.

(2.) Eſpecially when we conſider what Influence the Heart has on the whole Man, to govern all his Thoughts, Words and Actions. By the Heart we mean that main Propenſion and Inclination which like the main Spring in a Watch or Clock governs all the leſſer Movements and ſets them a going. As this main Spring of the Heart goes, the Man thinks, contrives, ſpeaks and acts. This is like the determining what Port we will ſail to, which has the chief Conſideration in ſhaping the whole Courſe.

(3.) From whence the Concluſion follows very naturally, that the laying up our Treaſure on Earth makes us worldly, and forgetful of Heaven; and that on the contrary the laying up of our Treaſure in Heaven make us of an heavenly Temper, and is the main Engine to reform the whole Heart and Life. The Purport of all this is, that the more we lay in for this World, the

more our Hearts and Thoughts will be carried after it, and the more worldly and covetous ſhall we prove, and conſequently the more ſhall we endanger our Souls; and the more good we do with an Eye to Heaven, the more heavenly minded ſhall we prove, and the more directly ſhall we ſteer our Courſe to Heaven.

Thus now I have explained the ſeveral Notions of the Text. The Duty which our Saviour here urges is of the greateſt Importance of any I know in Chriſtian Morals: For upon it depends the whole ſhaping of our Chriſtian Courſe. The main Queſtion which is to be firſt reſolved is what Port we are bound for? For if we are bound for Heaven, and intend to make the beſt of our Way thither, we muſt have a ſpecial Care that the World deceive us not with its falſe Allurements. If you alledge the Difficulty of obſerving juſt Bounds between God and the World, I ſhall only put you in Mind of theſe two Things. Firſt, that at the laſt Occaſion I circumſcribed your Duty in this Matter with a great many particular Rules, which it would be too tedious now to repeat. Secondly, that the frequent Conſideration of your main End and Deſign will ſo regulate all your other Movements, that ye cannot eaſily miſs of the Mark. For if ye are bound for Heaven, ye will, ſo to ſpeak, remit your Effects thither as faſt as ye can; ye will ſo diſpoſe of all your Concerns here, as they may turn to the beſt Account

in

in the future State. And though ye know not the preciſe Quantity fit to be beſtowed into the heavenly Treaſure, this very Aim will teach you not to be niggardly that Way, ſince of all our Eſtate it is that which will turn to the beſt Account. There are many other Duties, which God has not thought fit preciſely to determine, but only to direct by general Rules; as in Eating, Drinking, Apparel, Furniture and the like, he has contented himſelf to give us general Rules of Temperance, Sobriety, Humility and Frugality; and to forbid Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Vanity, and Prodigality, all which we can comply with, tho' it is not determined juſt how much we ſhall eat and drink and wear. So in the Matter of *Good Works*, the more we ſow, the more we ſhall reap; the more we put into the Bank of Heaven, the more we ſhall take out with multiplied Intereſt. This is by much the ſecureſt Part of our Eſtate or Treaſure, not ſubject to divers Accidents, as our worldly Eſtates are, but as the Apoſtle calls it *a good Foundation againſt the Time to come.*

I ſhall conclude after I have acquainted you that it is not only Charities or Alms-deeds, which go into the heavenly Treaſure, but the Acts and Habits of all other Chriſtian Virtues whatſoever. Our Works of Faith, and Patience, and Peaceableneſs: Our Improvements of the ſeveral Talents God has entruſted us with. There is nothing we do with an Eye to his Service that ſhall be paſt

by or forgotten by him; nay, the very Will and Deſire to do Good, where we want the Ability, ſhall be put to our Account: So that we have all the Encouragements in the World to be good, and to do Good.

Now God of his infinite Mercy give us all Grace to be fruitful in every good Work, to his Glory and our own eternal Happineſs, through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt. To whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON XV.

MAT. VI. 22.

The Light of the Body is the Eye; if therefore thine Eye be ſingle, thy whole Body ſhall be full of Light.

V. 23. **But if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body ſhall be full of Darkneſs. If therefore the Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs!**

The Third Sermon on this Text.

THESE Words, if I apprehend them right, are a further Continuation and Improvement of that Argument againſt Covetouſneſs, which our Saviour made uſe of in the Words immediately preceding; which were theſe, *For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.* He comes

comes now to ſhew the Danger of a worldly Heart and Mind; for illuſtrating of which, he borrows a Similitude from the Eye of the Body, which he calls *the Light of the Body*, directing it in all its Steps and Actions. Now, ſays he, if the Eye be ſingle, that is, ſpure from all noxious Humours, which obſtruct the Sight of it, then the whole Body ſhall be full of Light; that is, the Body will have a fair clear Light to direct it in all its Motions and Actions; but if the Eye be blinded with Rheum, the whole Body ſuffers, as wanting a Light to direct it in its ſeveral Motions and Actions. So it is with the Heart, and Mind, or Conſcience, that inward Light, if it be kept pure from all noxious Humours of vitious or worldly Affections, it will be a good Light to guide the whole Man in all his Walk and Behaviour. But if that inward Light of the Mind is darkened through any corrupt Affection whatſoever, more eſpecially through this of *Covetouſneſs and Worldly-mindedneſs*, it is impoſſible to reckon up the innumerable wrong Steps, which that Darkneſs in the Mind will occaſion in the whole Life and Converſation: *If the Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs!* This I take to be the true Senſe; but becauſe the Words, eſpecially as they ſound in our Language, are really difficult; it will not be amiſs, by conſidering the Parts of the Compariſon, to make the Meaning as plain as may be, to every intelligent Hearer. 1. Firſt then, As to the Eye's being the

Light

Light of the Body; this is plain enough that it is the Eye, and no other Member, which ſerves for a Light, or Candle, to direct the whole Body in its ſeveral Motions and Actions. 2. It is here ſaid, that *when the Eye is ſingle, the whole Body is full of Light.* As to the Expreſſion, *full of Light*, in the Original it is only φωτεινὸν, that is, *lightſome*; but for the Singleneſs of the Eye, that ſeems to be the moſt obſcure Expreſſion, which indeed has caſt a Miſt upon the whole Compariſon. For clearing of it, we are to conſider that the Original Word, ἁπλοῦς, tho' it chiefly ſignifies *ſingle*, or *ſimple*, yet it often ſignifies likewiſe *pure*, *ſincere*, or *perfect*; when a thing is ſo incorrupt, that it is not adulterated with any vitious Mixture; and from hence the Word came to be uſed for any thing that is good and perfect, and without Blemiſh in its kind. And I believe it is to be underſtood in this Place, for *a good Eye* that has no Blemiſh or Defect, as appears by its being ſet in Oppoſition to *the evil Eye*, which makes the Body dark, in the next Verſe. 3. Now for the Application of the Similitude, the outward Light is compared with the inward; and particularly the bad Eye, and the Darkneſs occaſioned by it, is compared to the inward Eye of the Underſtanding, Mind, and Conſcience, vitiated by Covetouſneſs, or any other bad Affection, and the prodigious Errors in Life conſequent thereon.

The Words being thus explained, there are ſeveral uſeful Truths, which from them preſent themſelves

ſelves to our Conſideration; which I ſhall a little further recommend to your Thoughts and Practice, particularly theſe four or five.

I. That there is an inward Light of the Mind and Conſcience, which is to direct the moral Part of our Actions, as the Eye directs the external Motions and Actions of the Body.

II. That every evil Affection to any Sin, among other evil Effects of it, obſcures this inward Light, that it can't ſo well perform its Duty, but is apt to miſlead us into ſinful Courſes.

III. That this is particularly verified in the evil Affection of Covetouſneſs, or Worldly-mindedneſs, that it blinds this inward Light, ſo as to make it apt to miſgovern us in our Opinions and Actions.

IV. That when the inward Light of the Mind and Conſcience is darkened, this occaſions a vaſt Number of other Errors and Follies in the Life and Converſation.

V. That it is therefore our Duty to uſe our utmoſt Endeavours, both to keep that inward Light free from all Clouds of evil Affections and Inclinations, that it may give us clear Direction in all Duty;

Duty; and to follow those good Directions in our Life and Conversation.

I. The first Thing I observe in the Words, is, that there is an inward Light of the Mind and Conscience, which is to direct the moral Part of our Actions, as the Eye directs the external Motions and Actions of the Body. In my Text it is called the Light that is in thee. Whether we call it the Light of Reason, or the Law of Nature, or the Law of the Mind, or an enlightened Understanding, or the Conscience, or the Light within; it is very certain, if we would look inwards, we should find some Principle, which both directs us in our Duty, and approves or reproves, according as we observe or neglect it. This Principle is much weakened by natural Corruption, and yet more by erroneous Doctrines and wicked Practices, and strong Prejudices of Education. And again, it is much improved by good Doctrine, and an holy Life, and especially by the Grace of God illuminating our Minds in the practical Knowledge of Divine Truths.

Now what the Eye is to the Body, that is this internal Light to the Mind; it discovers between the right and the wrong Way; it is given us by God as a Guide of our Actions, with all the Improvements of external Revelation and internal Grace. And one of the most fundamental Errors we are guilty of, is, instead of adverting to this

inward

inward Light, to be guided by what is gratifying to the outward Senſes, or to be led away by Cuſtom, Prejudice, or Example, without applying ourſelves to this inward Director, to find out the Truth or Falſhood, the Conveniency or Inconveniency of Things to our preſent Circumſtances. This is as if in our walking we ſhould ſhut our Eyes, and chooſe to go in the Dark, or to be led by a Guide blindfold, making no more uſe of the Eye of the Mind, than if we had no ſuch Faculty.

II. The ſecond Thing I obſerved in the Words, was, that every evil Affection to any Sin whatſoever, and much more every evil Habit, among other bad Effects of it, obſcures this inward Light, that it can't ſo well perform its Duty, but is apt to miſlead us into ſinful Courſes. This we may gather from the ſame Compariſon in the Text, where the Eye vitiated with Rheum, is compared with the Light in us obſcured with any noxious Humour; that is, any ſinful Inclination or Habit. Beſides, it is the very Scope and Purport of this Part of our Saviour's Diſcourſe, to guard us againſt the Sin of Covetouſneſs, from this very Conſideration, that it blinds the Eye of our Mind and Underſtanding, and by darkening it, is the Occaſion of innumerable Errors in the Life and Converſation. But in order to the fixing of this Blot on Covetouſneſs or Worldly-mindneſs, our Saviour here lays it down as a general evil Conſequence

of

of all Vice, that it has this bad Effect on the Eye of the Mind, that it turns the Light which is in us into Darkneſs. Now how this corrupt Inclination doth thus blind the Underſtanding, is worth the Enquiry, that ſo we may the better perceive the Force of our Saviour's Argument. I ſhall mention ſome of the chief of thoſe Ways, how Vice vitiates the Underſtanding.

1. All Vice by tetharing the Mind down to ſome carnal Object, doth by ſo doing divert it from the Contemplation and Search of Truth. Vice is a Clog upon a Man, which retards all his Diligence in the Study of good Things.

2. All Vice vitiates the Faculty of the Underſtanding, that it ſees Things through a falſe Glaſs, and in a wrong Light; as a Man that has the Jaundice ſees not Things in their true Colours, but as they are tinctured with that yellow Diſeaſe which is in himſelf; ſo the vitious Man infuſes a ſtrong Tincture of his own Conceits into all Truth, that he can't ſee Things in their native Beauty.

3. As vitious Habits turn to a ſecond Nature, the Man who is infected with them, has no right Reliſh of any thing, which is not of Affinity with his own Conceptions; he wants the right diſcerning Faulties, as having his Palate vitiated by a long feeding upon Traſh. What is ſaid of the natural Man, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. *That he receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, nor can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, may, *a fortiori*, be

be ſaid of the vitious Man, in whom the Corruption of Nature is much increaſed by vitious Habits.

4. If what has been ſaid in general of the vitious Man, ſhould be applied to particular Vices, it will make it ſtill plainer, that every Vice contributes to the darkening of the Underſtanding, which ought to direct the Man in his Courſe of Life. Drunkenneſs, it will be owned, beſots the Mind, and unqualifies it both for ſacred and ſecular Knowledge. Luſt makes the Mind ſo carnal, that it can have no Taſte or Reliſh for ſpiritual Truths. Malice, and Envy, and Hatred, and Enmity, do ſo blind the Mind, that it can diſcern no good Quality in the hated Perſon, nor any Truth and Right (tho there be ever ſo much) in his Cauſes. There is nothing more contrary to all Vice, than Humility, Prayer, Meditation of divine Things, an earneſt Study of the Word of God, and all the other ſacred Arts, whereby the Mind is improved in the Knowledge of Divine Truths, the keeping of a good Conſcience being one of them. But of all Vices, none unfits us more for the Knowledge of our Duty, by blinding our Underſtanding, than Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Cares of the World; which becauſe I believe it was chiefly deſigned by our Saviour in theſe Words, I ſhall therefore more particularly inſiſt upon.

III. This is the third Thing I propoſed to conſider from the Words, That Covetouſneſs, or Worldly-mindedneſs,

mindedneſs, doth exceedingly obſcure this inward Light, ſo as to make it apt to miſgovern us in our Opinions and Actions. Whenever any Duty interferes with our worldly Intereſt, the inward Light of the covetous Man is ſo blinded, that he can't perceive his Duty upon thoſe Occaſions, but is under vaſt Temptation to be deceived in his Judgment, and conſequently in his Life and Practice. In many Caſes, for Example, where God requires a Bounty and Liberality to the Poor, this worldly Temper either perſuades us that the Perſon propoſed to be relieved, is no ſuch Object of Charity, or that we ourſelves are not in a Condition to afford the Relief; or that we have many other more preſſing Occaſions; or that there are many others more capable of affording the Relief than we are; or, laſtly, if the Occaſion is a little more than ordinary clamorous, that he is induced to ſupply it, his Covetouſneſs is legible in his very Charities, for he parts with them like ſo much Blood; they are ſo ſcanty as to the Quantity, ſo ſtingy as to the Manner, that as the Apoſtle ſays, it is not like (a) *a Buſineſs of Bounty, but of Covetouſneſs.* But then as to Acts of Gratitude and Generoſity, theſe are Things ſo foreign to the covetous Man's Temper, that he has no Senſe of them at all. Nay, there are a thouſand Things of common Juſtice and

(a) 2 Cor. ix. 5.

Honeſty, of Courteouſneſs and Civility, and even of Intereſt and Self-preſervation, in which Men, blinded by Covetouſneſs, forget themſelves, and do Things very unjuſt, very unbecoming, and often dangerous to their own Safety and Intereſt. I will give you an Inſtance of this in the known Story of *David* and *Nabal*; (a) *Nabal* was a Man whoſe Heart was very much ſet on the World, in which he had acquired a very great Eſtate, and was become exceeding rich. Now obſerve what Influence this wrong Turn of his Mind had upon him, in miſleading him in the Conduct of himſelf and his Actions. Firſt, This ſelfiſh Temper did ſo contract all his Thoughts to himſelf, that he had no Conſideration or Regard at all for other People; he lived in Plenty, but had no Bowels towards his poor Neighbours, particularly *David* and his Men, who were in very ſtraitened Circumſtances in his Neighbourhood. Then it made him utterly unmindful and regardleſs of Favours received, and inſenſible of the Duty of Gratitude for them; for tho *David* and his Men had treated him and his very civilly, in not only forbearing to meddle with his great Flocks and Herds themſelves, while they encamped in his Neighbourhood; (a very extraordinary Favour from an indigent Army) but likewiſe in protecting him and them from all

(a) 1 Sam. xxv. 4, &c.

Thieves

Thieves and Robbers, and other Enemies, that they had not ſuffered the leaſt Damage, while *David* lay ſo near them: Yet *Nabal*, we find, had not the leaſt Senſe of this Favour, being utterly void of Gratitude and Generoſity, Virtues as oppoſite to a covetous Mind, as Light is to Darkneſs. When *David*'s Straits at laſt were urgent, he ſent a civil Requeſt to *Nabal* for a little Supply, without any Anger or Threatning, only calmly putting him in mind that they had been very kind and ſerviceable to his People; that they had not only abſtained from his Flocks themſelves, but had defended them from the Injuries of all others; and that being in Want of Proviſions, and coming in a good Day, when, according to Cuſtom, he made a great Feaſt at his Sheep-ſhearing, they prayed ſome little Supply for their Neceſſity, not determining what, or how much, but leaving it entirely to his own Courteſy and Generoſity: But, alas! they were miſtaken in their Man; Arguments from Gratitude and Generoſity were of no Conſideration with one of his churliſh and covetous Temper: It had been much eaſier to have wrought on his Fear than his Gratitude. On the one hand he was puft up with an high Conceit of himſelf, and his great Fortune; on the other hand, he deſpiſed *David* and his Men as a Company of poor indigent Fellows, than which Crime of *Poverty*, nothing could have made them look leſs in his Eye, conſidering what Place the World had in his Heart. His Wealth,

and Pride, and Self-conceit occaſioned thereby, and their Poverty, and Submiſſiveneſs, merely blinded him, that he could not ſee, on this Occaſion, even his own Intereſt; far leſs the Rules of Juſtice, Charity, Gratitude, Generoſity, Liberality, or even common Civility, which any other Man who would have conſidered this Caſe, not blinded by a ſelfiſh and covetous Temper, in the midſt of ſo plentiful Circumſtances, might eaſily have ſeen. And therefore inſtead of a kind Reception of them and their Meſſage, he was ſo overſeen as to give them a ſurly and provoking Anſwer, which had like to have coſt him both his Life and Eſtate, if better Meaſures had not been afterwards taken, than his Covetouſneſs and Churliſhneſs ſuggeſted. This is one plain Inſtance, how a covetous Heart ſet on the World, blinds a Man that he can't eaſily ſee and find out his Duty. And ſo it is in moſt of the other Circumſtances of Life. If ſuch a Man is a Maſter, he is ſo penurious that he will think it no Crime to get an Eſtate, if he can, out of the very Backs and Bellies of his Servants. If he is an Huſband, or Father, he will be apt to begrudge the decent, if not the neceſſary Supplies of Maintenance and good Education. If he is employed as a Judge, whatever Caſe comes before him, that interferes with his own private Gain, he is apt to give his Opinion according to his worldly Intereſt, rather than according to Equity and good Conſcience. If he is employed in the honourable

honourable Station of a Councellor and Legiſlator, he will be apt to hazard the publick Ruin of his Country, for want of a liberal and publick Spirit, to procure the Good of it at any moderate Charge or Expence. If he is entruſted as Tutor or Guardian to any Orphan, his chief Endeavour is not to contrive Things for the Orphan's Benefit, but for his own. If he is employ'd as a Factor, Artiſt, Tradeſman, or Overſeer, he contrives his Work not in the beſt Way of Juſtice and Honeſty to his Employer, but ſo as to yield moſt Profit to himſelf. In ſhort, whatever he goes about, Covetouſneſs mingles in with it, and mars it. Even in Matters of Religion, ſuch Opinions and Practices are moſt likely to be eſpouſed by him, as are moſt ſuited to his ſaving and worldly Principles, without Conſideration of the Truth or Falſhood, the Advantages or Diſadvantages of them, towards promoting the great Ends of Religion, Holineſs, and Virtue: An Example of which we have in *Demetrius*, and the other Tradeſmen, who made Silver Shrines for the Temple of *Diana*, *Acts* xix. So that the covetous Man ſees every thing through a falſe Glaſs, and judges wrong of it, and practiſes wrong upon it. And this leads me to

IV. The fourth Thing I propoſed to conſider, namely, That when the inward Light of the Mind and Conſcience is darkened, this occaſions a vaſt Number of other Errors and Follies in the Life,

and Converſation. *If therefore the Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs!* In theſe Words our Saviour intimates the terrible Conſequences of a Mind once darkened with any Vice. To pretend to give you the Detail of this Truth, I might as well pretend to reckon up how many wrong Steps a blind Man without a Guide would make; how he would fall ſometimes into the Mire, ſometimes over a great Stumbling-block, ſometimes down a Precipice, ſometimes into a Ditch, and ſometimes into the Briers; and when he is there, how every Step he fetches to extricate himſelf, entangles him more and more. To give you an Example in a Mind tinctured with Malice or Hatred; It is natural for ſuch chearfully to hearken, and readily to ſuck in and believe all ill Stories of the Perſons they hate; and as the Venom of it ſpreads, to improve them by Jealouſy and Invention. In order to this, it is natural to encourage Tattlers and Talebearers; and from private Calumnies, it is as natural for that wicked Temper to proceed to publick Affronts and Injuries; and then for the Juſtification of them, to Forgery and Miſrepreſentation. Thus if Satan can once poſſeſs the Mind with one black Vice, as Malice, Luſt, or Covetouſneſs, it is an eaſy Thing afterwards to lead ſuch a Perſon in a String, from one wrong Step to another, till it is really incredible to what Degrees of Wickedneſs we ſhall be hurried at laſt, only in Conſequence of a little

Ambition,

Ambition, or Covetouſneſs, or Reſentment, or Jealouſy, or Hatred, or Envy, againſt ſuch as ſtand in the Way of any of our Deſigns or Paſſions. Nay moſt of the Errors and Hereſies that are in the World, are owing to this Cauſe, of the Mind's being blinded with Vice. And it is moſt probable this is the trueſt Account of Atheiſm, that ſince Men do not live up to their Principles, they bring their Principles down to their Vices. But it is high time to haſten to

V. The fifth and laſt Thing propoſed, and which follows naturally as a Conſequence from all the reſt, that it is therefore our Duty to uſe our utmoſt Endeavours both to keep this inward Light free from all Clouds of Vice, that it may afford us clear Direction in our Duty, and to follow thoſe good Directions in our Life and Converſation. Our Duty here is twofold.

1. To have an unbyaſſed good Guide of our own Minds and Conſciences, that the Light in us be not Darkneſs.

2. Then to take care that we follow the Directions of that inward Guide.

I have not Time now to dwell upon them, but they are both difficult Taſks: firſt, to keep the Mind and Conſcience ſo clear and unbyaſſed, that it be no way clouded with Prejudice, or Paſſion; Jealouſy, or Suſpicion; Malice, Hatred, or Self-Intereſt; Addictedneſs to Party or Faction, Favour

or Partiality; but that we keep ourſelves equally well poiſed to thoſe that differ in Opinion from us, as to thoſe that are of our Mind and Sentiment; to thoſe that are our Foes, as well as to thoſe that are our Friends; to thoſe that thwart our worldly and carnal Intereſts, as well as to thoſe that do not ſtand in the way of them. Let us ſtudy to diſcern and love Truth and Virtue, wherever they are, and carefully to guard againſt all Prejudices and ſiniſter Byaſſes, that may vitiate or deprave our diſcerning Faculty.

Then when we clearly ſee the Truth, let no natural or acquired Corruption of our own Hearts, let no Temptation or ill Advice of others, let no Miſrepreſentations of malicious Inſtruments, let no Conveniency or Self-Intereſt of our own, or any others whom we may affect, tempt us to act contrary to the Dictates of our own well informed Minds and Conſciences, as we expect either Peace here, or eternal Felicity hereafter. Both which, God of his infinite Mercy beſtow upon us all, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake.

To whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON XVI.

MAT. VI. 24.

No Man can ſerve two Maſters: For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

IN theſe Words we have another Argument againſt Covetouſneſs, taken from the Inconſiſtency of it with the Service of God: In order to which our Saviour firſt repeats a common Maxim, that *No Man can ſerve two Maſters*; meaning Maſters of contrary Humours and Intereſts, for that both will ſecretly ſettle

ſettle his Affection on the one, and be alienated from the other; and openly, whenever their Intereſts interfere, he will cleave to the one, and forſake the other. Then he applies this particularly to the Service of the World, and aſſerts the Inconſiſtency of it with the Service of God. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* In the Words we have theſe three Things.

I. The Maxim in general; that *no Man can ſerve two Maſters.*

II. The Reaſons of that Aſſertion; that both his inward Affection, and his external Service will be drawn two different and contrary Ways.

III. The Application of this Maxim, with the Reaſons of it, to the Service of God and the World; *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* All which I ſhall conſider as they lie in order.

I. Firſt, we have the Maxim in general; that *no Man can ſerve two Maſters.* For underſtanding of which, ſomething is to be conſidered of ourſelves, Men, ſomething of Maſters, and ſomething of the Service here ſpoke of.

1. As to ourſelves, Men; it is certain we are never without a Maſter; we find we are far from being able to ſubſiſt of ourſelves, we muſt lean to ſomething without us for our Support. As the Vine

Vine clings to the Oak, and by Virtue thereof creeps up, which, if left alone by itſelf, could only crawl along the Ground; ſo Man, for all his Pride and Vanity, is a poor weak Thing of himſelf, and muſt take to ſome outward Supports. It is true all the Supports we betake ourſelves to, except God, are rotten and deceitful; all our other Maſters break and leave us in the lurch, but we are often deceived with them firſt, and take them to be very ſubſtantial, tho' they prove but Vanity.

As we have all ſome Maſter or other, ſo we have but one at a time, that is, one that carries away our Heart in chief, though our Hearts and Affections may happen to be parted, and to have divers inferiour Inclinations to other Things. But there is always one Thing uppermoſt in our Affections, and that is it to which we are properly Servants.

2. By *Maſters* here is to be underſtood Maſters in chief, of which one is not ſubordinate to the other: For where they are ſubordinate, a Man may eaſily obey two or more Maſters, who uſe their ſeveral Authorities to carry on one and the ſame Service and Deſign. But by two Maſters here are meant two, whoſe Deſigns, Humours, Intereſts and Commands are quite contrary to one another.

3. By Service is meant a State of Servitude; not any one Act of Service. Now by being a Servant in

in this Senſe is meant the being entirely at his Maſter's beck and command, both in Heart and Affection, and in Deed and Performance. So that the Meaning of the whole is this. That a Man cannot at the ſame time be a ready Slave to two Maſters that have both the ſupreme Command, and are of different or contrary Humours and Tempers, and have different Intereſts to carry on, one from the other.

II. I come next to the Reaſons of this Aſſertion that *no Man can ſerve two Maſters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other.* The Meaning of which I take to be, that neither the inward Affection, nor the outward Attendance can be ſo divided as to pleaſe both. By his ſpeaking of the inward Affection, Love and Hatred, it is an Argument that he had an Eye to ſuch Maſters as would not be put off with the bare bodily Labour and Attendance without the Heart; as indeed ſuch Maſters are both God and the World. It is well known that both thoſe Services require great Care and Application, abundance of Thoughts and Contrivance, abundance of Attention and Heedfulneſs, for a Man to devote himſelf to them, ſo as to be a Servant to either. And accordingly this inward Affection of the Heart will ſhew itſelf in the outward Behaviour, by cleaving to one Maſter, and ſlighting the other. There is a ſmall Difficulty

Difficulty appears to ſome in the wording this Part of the Sentence, becauſe inſtead of repeating the Words, loving and hating, the Words, cleaving to and deſpiſing or ſlighting, are made uſe of; but while they are Words of the ſame Senſe, there is rather a Beauty in avoiding the Tautology of Repetition; and further it is an Explication of the Love and Hatred as extending to the outward Behaviour as well as the inward Affection. *q. d.* No Man can ſerve two Maſters; for either he will hate and ſlight the firſt, and love and cleave to the ſecond, or elſe he will love and cleave to the firſt, and hate and ſlight the ſecond. It appears by the whole Drift of this Diſcourſe, that the two Maſters are to be underſtood of two Maſters diſagreeing in their Sentiments, and requiring quite contrary Services. For if they were unanimous, and always commanded the ſame Thing, it would be an eaſy Thing to ſerve them both. It is worth obſerving that in the Deſcription our Saviour gives here of *the Service* of the two Maſters, he confines it to theſe two, firſt, the inward Love and Hatred; and then the external adhering to the one, and ſlighting of the other. They are both neceſſary; for to truſt to the Heart and Affection without the other would be to deceive our ſelves; there being no way to know the Heart, but by the Regularity or Irregularity of the Actions. And the Actions without the Heart, might likewiſe eaſily deceive us, the ſame Things being

ing often done out of Hypocriſy and By-ends; but when both are in conjunction, the inward Love of God, and the adhering to him, that is, to our Duty in a time of Trial and Temptation, theſe two together, I ſay, make up the full Deſcription of the Servant of God. We are not then to judge of our Sincerity in God's Service by other wrong Marks or Deſcriptions, as a great many do; not from any Meaſure or Degree of Knowledge of God, or any ſuch Perfection of the intellectual Faculty, or any Rectitude of Judgment about God; there being few ſo depraved in their Judgments, but that they will acknowledge God to be much preferable to the World; though they neither have a prevalent Love to him in their Hearts, nor obſerve his Laws in their Lives and Converſations. And from this Deſcription likewiſe, we may learn that as we are not to judge of our Eſtate by our Intellectuals, ſo neither are we to judge of it by the external Zeal of a Profeſſion. Many ſay *Lord, Lord*, whom Chriſt will never own. The ſureſt Mark of our being his Servants is, when there is an inward Love in the Heart joined with an adhering to him in all Temptations, and an actual preferring of his Service to that of the Devil, the World and the Fleſh. So much for the Reaſons of the Aſſertion, that *no Man can ſerve two Maſters.*

III. The

III. The third Thing I obſerved in the Words is, our Saviour's Application of this Maxim, with the Reaſons of it, to the Service of God and the World. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* The Word *Mammon* is a Syriack Word ſignifying Riches, and *Tertullian* ſays it was the God of Riches that went by this Name, for which Reaſon perhaps the Name is retained here in the Greek. It is to be obſerved here that there is a great Diſtinction to be made between *having of* Riches, and *ſerving* Riches. It is very poſſible that a Man may have Riches, and not ſerve them, or be a Slave to them. It is only this laſt which is here ſaid to be inconſiſtent with the Service of God. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* That a Man may lawfully poſſeſs Riches, ſo that they be not his Maſter, but that he employ them for thoſe good Uſes for which God deſigned them, there is no Manner of Doubt; for this gives a Man an Opportunity to exerciſe many excellent Virtues, of Piety, Charity, and Hoſpitality; beſides that in ſome Degree they are neceſſary for defraying the many Neceſſities and Conveniencies of Life. But for a Man to be a Slave to them, there is not any more dangerous Temptation, or more fruitful of Sin and Vice. In ſpeaking to it I ſhall do theſe two Things.

1. Conſider what it is to *ſerve Mammon.*

2. Shew how inconſiſtent it is with the Service of God.

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1. To *ſerve Mammon* is in general, to ſubject our ſelves to all the Pains and Drudgery of getting and keeping Wealth, without the Comfort of uſing and ſpending it for the ſeveral Neceſſities and Conveniencies of Life, and other charitable and pious Uſes upon which God has commanded us to beſtow it. There is a great Difference between the getting of Wealth, with a further Proſpect to thoſe good Ends and Uſes, for which God has appointed it, (for this is only to make it an Inſtrument for doing Good;) and the getting it with a Deſign only to be rich, and to hug ourſelves in the Poſſeſſion of an Eſtate, as if our chief Happineſs conſiſted in that Poſſeſſion, without further Uſe. The firſt of theſe has chiefly in view the Service of God, the pleaſing of him, and in order to that the Doing a great deal of Good; the other is the ſetting up, as it were, another God, in whoſe Service we take our chief Complacence and Delight. For that which is uppermoſt in our Heart and Thoughts, that which is ſought after for itſelf, that in which we place our chief Happineſs and Delight, that may be called our God, and the Service we beſtow upon it otherwiſe than to the true God, may juſtly be called *Idolatry*; not that the covetous Man believes in Riches as a God, but that he ſets it up for his ſupreme Good, and ſerves it with that unlimited Affection and Diligence, which is due only to God. And in this Senſe St. *Paul* calls *Covetouſneſs Idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. for

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it ſteals away the Heart from God, and fixes it on the World.

2. Now that ſuch a Servitude to Wealth is utterly incompatible and inconſiſtent with the Service of God is what I am to ſhew in the next Place. And in order to it I briefly offer the following Conſiderations.

(1.) Let us conſider that the Points to which the good Chriſtian, and the covetous Man direct their Courſe of Life are totally different. The covetous Man has chiefly in his Eye to become Great and Rich in this World; and the good Chriſtian has it chiefly in his Eye to ſecure himſelf of a State of Happineſs in the World to come. The having ſuch different Views and Aims obliges them to ſteer quite different Courſes. He that is bound to Heaven has his Thoughts taken up with the Contemplation of the heavenly Felicity; and having a Notion of that as ſomething far above theſe earthly Enjoynments, as conſiſting chiefly in the Love and Enjoyment of God, and in the bleſſed Society of Saints and Angels, he endeavours to fit himſelf for it, by acquainting himſelf with God and drawing near to him in the Duties of Devotion, as much as he can in this imperfect State. And in order to this he endeavours to diſentangle himſelf from all ſuperfluous Cares about the Things of this World, that his Heart may addict itſelf ſo much more entirely to the Concerns of another Life. As the Hope of enjoying God

ſtirs him up to all the Exerciſes of his Love, ſo the Hope of enjoying the bleſſed Society of Saints and Angels puts him upon the Study of all thoſe loving and friendly Virtues, which may fit him for that Enjoyment. So that Love to God and Man are the two chief Things, in ſuch a Man's Study and Endeavour; and Self-love and the Love of the World, as leading a Courſe quite contrary to theſe, are by him the moſt avoided. But now it is quite otherwiſe with the covetous Man, for this his Aim being chiefly to be Great and Rich in this World, his Affections, Projects and Contrivances are all worldly. Self-love and the Love of the World are the two chief Principles he is governed by: So that he ſteers a quite different Courſe from that of a good Chriſtian. His Hopes and Deſires are all earthly, and conſequently the Methods he takes to compaſs them are as different from thoſe of the heavenly minded Man as any Thing can be: as we ſhall ſee by and by.

(2.) Let us conſider that Covetouſneſs involving a Man in abundance of impertinent Cares, which take up his Time and Thoughts, in ſo far is a great Hinderance of his main Buſineſs. If there were no other harm in Covetouſneſs but this, that it encumbers the Mind with a great many ſuperfluous Cares, which occaſion a Forgetfulneſs of the main Concern, this would make it ſufficiently inconſiſtent with the Service of God. If *Martha* had

had a Reprimand for cumbering her ſelf (*a*) with many Things, while there was but one Thing neceſſary, *Martha* I ſay, who for ought appears, was a very good Woman, and was not generally cumbered, but only on that particular Occaſion; what ſhall we ſay of them who are in a perpetual Hurry about the World, all their Life long: That Life which ought to be ſpent in Preparation for Heaven? What would we ſay of a Maſter of a Ship, who when he ſhould get ready to put to Sea, ſpends his Time in Drinking and Gaming, and loſe ſeveral Opportunities of good Winds, and ſo makes nothing of his Voyage? Certainly ſuch a Man, though he is not quite ſo bad, is very little better than a Maſter that plays the Knave, and runs away with the Ship and Cargoe. But

(3.) This is not the worſt of the covetous Man's Practice: For Covetouſneſs engages him in a great many Courſes which are directly ſinful in themſelves, as by ſeveral Examples, which I ſhall inſtance in, may appear.

Covetouſneſs makes a Man uneaſy and diſcontented with his Circumſtances, unthankful to God for what he has; and envious of his Neighbour's Proſperity.

Covetouſneſs puts a Man upon many diſhoneſt and unjuſt Ways of getting, ſuch as, Lying, Equi-

(*a*) Luk. x. 41.

vocating, Perjury, Pilfering, Stealing, Oppreſſion, Exaction, Bribery, falſe Accounts, falſe Weights, and Meaſures, deceitful Making and Packing and even Counterfeiting of Commodities, ſlight and untrue Working, Shuffling off the Payment of Debts, and all the other innumerable baſe and diſhonourable Ways of impoſing upon the Ignorance and Credulity of our Neighbours: Whereas the Laws of our holy Religon require not only that we tranſact all our Matters with Juſtice and Honeſty, but with Honour and Decency, chooſing rather to take wrong, than to do it.

Covetouſneſs likewiſe puts Men upon many unjuſt Ways of ſaving; it makes them of a narrow, pinching and penurious Temper, and cauſes them to begrutch to themſelves, their Wives and Children, Friends, Relations, and Servants, the Neceſſaries and Comforts of Life, ſuitable to their Duty and Circumſtances. And if it makes Men ſo hard-hearted to thoſe of their own Houſe and Family, what does it do to Strangers, let their Circumſtances be ever ſo craving? In that Caſe the covetous Man will be apt to think, as *Nabal* anſwered *David's* Meſſengers, *Shall I take my Bread and my Drink, and my Fleſh that I have provided for my own Uſe and my Families, and give to Men that I know not whence they be?* Whereas the Spirit of Chriſtianity will teach us to be *ready to diſtribute,*

ſtribute, and willing to communicate, laying up for ourſelves a good Treaſure in Heaven.

Covetouſneſs is apt to make us fearful and cowardly in doing of our Duty, whenever we run any hazard of incurring any Loſs thereby. Inſtead of diſcharging our Conſcience with an honeſt Freedom, it will dictate to us the worldly Prudence of ſleeping in a ſound Skin. There would be no Confeſſors or Martyrs if it were liſtened to; but for the ſake of our Eſtates we ſhould ſay and unſay, ſign and unſign, ſwear and forſwear; nay, betray our deareſt Friend for a little filthy Lucre; whereas by the Laws of Religion we ſhould be ready to forſake all, and follow Chriſt.

And to Name no more, Covetouſneſs is apt to make us rely upon and truſt to our Eſtates, inſtead of truſting to and depending on God's Providence; whereas the Chriſtian Religion teaches us, *if Riches encreaſe, not to ſet our Hearts upon them: Not to be high minded, nor to truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all Things to enjoy.* How faint-hearted doth this Truſt make us in the Day of Adverſity? How faſt does it glew our Hearts to the World, and how unwilling does it make us to leave it? Whereas the true Chriſtian is in his Heart diſentangled from all Impediments, (*a*) *with his Loins girded about and his Lights*

(*a*) Luk. xii. 35.

burning, waiting for the coming of his Lord? But Time would fail me to reckon up all the Inconſiſtencies and Contrarieties between the Spirit of Covetouſneſs and the Spirit of Chriſtianity. I ſcarce know any Part of Chriſtian Duty, but what it contradicts. It is contrary to the Love of God with all our Heart; its contrary to the Love of our Neighbour, for it makes a Prey of him; tis contrary to inward Tranquillity, Self-denial and Contentedneſs, for it is continually thirſting after more of the World; its contrary to brotherly Love and Peace, and heavenly mindedneſs. In ſhort if any is reſolved to be covetous, he may even with the young Man in the Goſpel *go away ſorrowful*, for he can't be Chriſt's Diſciple. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.*

Having now ſpoke to the three Heads of Diſcourſe I propoſed from the Text, there are two or three Corollaries or Inferences I ſhall make from it, and recommend to your Conſideration and Practice.

1. The firſt is with relation to that general Maxim laid down in the Text, *that no Man can ſerve two Maſters.* And it is this; that though our Saviour applies this Maxim here only to Covetouſneſs, ſaying *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon*; yet it is really applicable to every other Vice that ſets up for a Competition with God in the Poſſeſſion of our Hearts. It is true of Ambition; it is true of Luſt; it is true of Malice and Revenge, and of every other predominant

predominant ſinful Affection; that we cannot ſerve God and it. And the Reaſon is they draw contrary Ways, and they propoſe contrary Ends, as might eaſily be ſhewed from the Particulars, if it would not be too great a Digreſſion. And therefore as our Saviour required us to call him only our Maſter, we muſt take great Care not to admit any Thing in Competition with him. For as here our Saviour teaches us the Incompatibleneſs of Coveteouſneſs with the Service of God, ſo elſe where he teaches us the Inconſiſtency of other Vices with it: As of falſe Honour and Vanity. (*a*) *How can ye believe*, ſays he, *who receive Honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour that cometh from from God only?* For we are told that (*b*) *they loved the Praiſe of Men more than the Praiſe of God.* We are told the ſame of Luſt. (*c*) *Ye Adulterers and Adultereſſes*, ſays St. James, *know ye not that the Friendſhip of this World is Enmity with God?* The ſame inconſiſtency with God Service, our Saviour takes Notice of in Malice and Hatred. (*d*) *Ye are of your Father the Devil*, ſays he, *and the Luſts of your Father ye will do: He was a Murderer from the Beginning and abode not in the Truth.* The Argument then we have been purſuing concerning the Impoſſibility of *ſerving God and Mammon*

(*a*) Joh. v. 44. (*b*) Joh. 12. 43. (*c*) Jam. iv. 4. Joh. viii. 44.

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will holds likewiſe againſt every other prevailing Luſt and Corruption.

2. A ſecond Inference I make from the Words is, that it is not every Sin we are guilty of that puts us thus in a State of Damnation or Enmity with God; but only thoſe Sins which have got the Maſtery of us, *We cannot ſerve two Maſters.* Now there is a great difference to be made between thoſe Sins, which we fall into through the Strength or Suddenneſs of a Temptation, which through the Grace of God we ſtruggle againſt, and get rid of; and ſome other habitual Sins to which we are perfect Slaves, and have given over our Endeavours to conquer and overcome them. The firſt ſort are what every good Man is ſtruggling againſt. But whoever they are that have given up themſelves to any habitual Sin they are at preſent the Devil's Slaves, *being led Captive by him at his Pleaſure.* That Servitude muſt be broke off, before it is poſſible they can be in a State of Grace.

3. A third Inference which will follow from what has been ſaid is this; that *ſeeing we cannot ſerve God and Mammon,* it is a vain Thing to attempt to reconcile thoſe two Services, as a great many do. How many are there who becauſe they are no Drunkards, no Curſers or Swearers, no Whoremongers or Adulterers, and abſtain careſully from ſeveral other groſs Vices; though they are extreme covetous, flatter themſelves that they are in a very good way, and do not doubt they

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are in a State of Grace. But if our Saviour's Doctrine in my Text is true, there is nothing more inconſiſtent with the Love and Service of God, than this Slavery to the World; nothing more contrary to the Spirit of Chriſtianity than Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Cares of the World.

To conclude then, let us halt no more between God and the World: But ſetting our Hearts on Heaven, let us both inwardly in our Minds diſburden our ſelves of the ſuperfluous Cares of the World, and *let our Converſation likewiſe be without Covetouſneſs*; and according as God hath bleſſed us, let us be ready to extend our Bounty and Charity to Chriſt's poor Members; aſſuring ourſelves that of all our Eſtate what is ſo beſtowed will turn to the beſt Account. Now to God the Father, *&c.*

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SERMON XVII.

MAT. VI. 25.

Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

First Sermon against Anxiety, on *Verse* 25.

I HAVE read to you these ten Verses, being all a Caution against Anxiety, or too great Sollicitude about the World, and an Enforcement thereof by several Arguments. The Caution we are to consider in the first Place, before we come to the Arguments, that we may know what it is our Saviour doth here require of us.

us. And this likewiſe lies firſt in our Way to be conſidered from the Text; which begins thus, *Therefore I ſay unto you, take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on.* It is a Caution againſt a Vice which will require a good deal of Explication, as bordering ſo near upon ſome other good Qualities, that, without abundance of Care and Attention, we ſhall be apt to miſtake the one for the other. To come then to a cloſe Conſideration of the Words, in them we have theſe Two Things.

I. The Connexion with what went before, *Therefore I ſay unto you.*

II. The Caution itſelf, *Take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on.*

I. I begin with the Connexion; for perhaps that may give us ſome Light into the Caution following. The Words immediately preceding, were, *Ye cannot ſerve God and* Mammon; *therefore I ſay unto you take no Thought for your Life.* From this Connexion it ſeems plain, that this taking Thought here ſpoke of, is ſomething of the Service of *Mammon*; q.d. Since ye cannot ſerve both God and *Mammon*; therefore take Care, that under pretence of a regular Care and Induſtry about the Neceſſaries of

of Life, Food, and Raiment, and far leſs about the Superfluities of it, ye be not involved in the Service of the World, and have your Hearts engaged in the Love and Cares of theſe inferior Things. And as for the Words, *I ſay unto you*; this is the uſual Mark of an Improvement of our Saviour's, either by a new Precept, or a better Explication of an old one, than they had been taught before. Particularly, the Doctrine of my Text ſeems to be a good Improvement of the Tenth Commandment: That forbidding only the coveting what is our Neighbours; but this moderating our own otherwiſe lawful Deſires and Endeavours after the World. It is therefore a Doctrine more peculiar to Chriſt, and on that account ſhould be ſo much the dearer to us Chriſtians.

II. From the Connexion, I paſs on to the Caution itſelf, *Take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on.* This is ſomething further than he had ſaid before, about not laying up Treaſures on Earth; for it was obvious enough for them to think, though we may not ſpend our Thoughts and Time in amaſſing uſeleſs Treaſures, yet we may lawfully provide Neceſſaries for Life, Food, and Raiment, not only for our preſent, but for our future Occaſions; and not only for ourſelves, but for our Children, and all others under our Care. To obviate this Subterfuge for worldly

Cares,

Cares, our Saviour ſeems to allow of ſuch Providence, ſo it be made with an eaſy Mind, without engaging us in immoderate Cares, without making the World our Maſter, and without minding it in the firſt and chief Place, ſo as to turn away our Hearts from better Things, God and our Duty. This I take to be the Purport of this Caution. But to give as great Light as I can into this Matter, I ſhall do theſe two Things: Firſt, I will ſhew that it is not all Care about the World, but only an exceſſive diſtruſtful Care, which is here forbidden. Then I ſhall more particularly deſcribe that anxious Care, which we are here cautioned againſt.

1. Firſt then, It is not all Care and Concern about the World which is here forbidden. The Words of the Text, indeed, in our Tranſlation, *Take no Thought*, ſound that way; and the Example of *the Fowls of the Air*, and *the Lillies of the Field*, with which the Caution is preſſed, are by ſome thought to favour it; for that they without any of their own Huſbandry, are provided for. But all this is a Miſtake, as I ſhall ſhew you both from the Text and Context, and from ſome other Paſſages of Scripture, and the Reaſon of the Thing.

And firſt, That there is no ſuch Thing in the Text or Context, as that we are to take no Care about the World, I ſhall make it appear, by examining thoſe Expreſſions in either, which ſeem to make for this Senſe.

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The firſt Expreſſion here, which is apt to induce this Belief, is that of *taking no Thought for our Life, what we ſhall eat, or what we ſhall drink.* The Expreſſion of *taking Thought*, in our Language, is equivalent to the *being anxious* or *ſolicitous*, or *laying a thing much to Heart*; or *taking on*, as we call it, *for ſomething that gives us great Trouble and Concern.* And ſo it is ſuch a Trouble or Anxiety about the World, which is here forbid. The Original, indeed, doth much more clearly expreſs this, μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν, for it ſignifies be not anxious, or ſolicitous in your Soul; or do not vex and diſquiet yourſelves. The *French* tranſlate it well, *Ne vous mettez point en Peine*; i. e. do not trouble, or diſquiet yourſelves. This Word μεριμνάω, ſignifies not barely to take Care, but the Height of Care; ſuch a Care as is due to a Thing of the greateſt Conſequence and Concern; and therefore I obſerve, where this Word is joined to any worldly Thing, it is taken for a Vice; whereas being joined to any thing belonging to our Souls, or future State, or our Duty to God, or our Neighbour, it is a Virtue: As in the Parable of the Sower, *Mat.* xiii. 22. *The Care of this World, and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches, are ſaid to choak the Word.* Theſe Cares are by all the three Evangeliſts, St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*, who mention that Parable, compared to *Thorns, which ſpringing up with the good Seed, choaked it, and hindred it to bring forth Fruit to Perfection.* And *Luke*

xxi. 34.

xxi: 34. there is a Caution given, in which the Word, μέριμνα, is uſed; which I think gives great Light to this Caution in my Text, *Take heed to yourſelves*, ſays our Saviour, *leſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life, and ſo that Day come upon you unawares.* For as there it is not Victuals and Drink, but Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, which is condemned; ſo neither here is it all worldly Cares that are condemned, but ſuch an Exceſs of them, as clogs or overcharges the Heart, and eats out our Care of better Things. To illuſtrate what I ſay of the Uſe of the Word μεριμνάω, that applied to heavenly Things, or our Duty, it is taken in a good Senſe, but to worldly Things in a bad Senſe; there is a notable Paſſage, 1 *Cor.* vii. 33. where the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of the Danger of the married State, lays it chiefly upon this, that it is apt to engage Men and Women ſo much the more in worldly Cares; and gives the Advantage to the ſingle State, chiefly becauſe their Care was directed to better Things; he uſes the very ſame Word with this in my Text: *He that is unmarried*, ſays he, *careth for the Things that belong to the Lord, how he may pleaſe the Lord: But he that is married careth for the Things that are of the World, how he may pleaſe his Wife.* It is the ſame Word in both Places, and it teaches us, I think, thus much, that there is a ponderous Care or Concern of the Mind, in my Text called, *taking Thought*, which ought not

to

to be applied to the inferiour Things of this World; but that a much inferiour Degree of Care may ſerve them, as it follows afterwards in this ſame Text, that *we ſhould ſeek* firſt *the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*, that is in the chief or principal Place, whereas a leſſer, ſecondary Care, will do for the Things of the World. The Word then here tranſlated, *taking Thought*, ſignifies that weighty Care and Concern, which ought to be reſerved for the greateſt Things; and therefore it is allowed and honourably ſpoke of, whenever it is applied to God and our Duty; the Care of the Churches, the Love of our Neighbour, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteouſneſs thereof; but condemned, when applied to the World, and the Cares of this Life.

And as to *the Fowls of the Air*, and *the Lillies of the Field*, they are brought in to confirm this ſame Doctrine, that God can without our ſuch weighty Care, find us Food and Raiment; for it is very obſervable, that the Compariſon is brought with ſuch Things, in which, in the Point of Care, we have much the Advantage; for we can ſow, and reap, and gather into Barns, which the Fowls of the Air can't do; and we can undergo both the Field Labour, and the Houſe Labour, about the Materials for Clothing, which the Lillies can't do; and therefore the Concluſion is ſtill drawn, *a fortiori*; *are not ye much better than they?* Which I take to relate in that Place, not ſo much to the ſuperior

Perior Dignity of our Nature, (tho that is likewiſe true) as to the better Circumſtances we are in, to guard us againſt that ponderous Care or Anxiety, ſince *we can ſow, and reap, and gather into Barns, and labour, and ſpin*, which they can't do.

If from the Text, and Context, we go on to the Conſideration of other Texts of Scripture, we ſhall quickly find that it is not all Care and Labour, but only Anxiety and Solicitude about the World, which is forbidden: *Ye yourſelves know*, ſays St. *Paul* in his Speech to the Elders of *Miletus*, *Acts* xx. 34. *that theſe Hands have miniſtred unto my Neceſſities, and to them that were with me. I have ſhewed you all Things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the Weak, and to remember the Words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.* And wherever he hears of theſe Idlers, he fails not to reprove them, as 2 *Theſ.* iii. 11. *We hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are buſy Bodies: now them that are ſuch, we command and exhort, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with Quietneſs they work, and eat their own Bread.* And in the Words immediately preceding, he pronounces a ſevere Sentence againſt them: *When we were with you*, ſays he, *this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat.*

I need not inſiſt on the Reaſon of the Thing, our Induſtry as to the World being ſo neceſſary for ſupplying our own Wants, and to enable us to

provide for our Families, and to extend our Charity to the Poor.

Ye may wonder, perhaps, why I ſhould any way labour this Point; it is only that ye may not miſtake our Saviour's Doctrine in a Buſineſs of this Conſequence, as ſome have done; as if in forbidding Anxiety here, he forbad all Care and Diligence about our ordinary Callings; all Forethought and Contrivance, Induſtry and Frugality, and as if we ſhould take no Thought at all about any Thing, but let all Things run into as great Diſorder as Careleſſneſs and Negligence will drive them.

Secondly, But now having ſhewed you that Labour, and Induſtry, about our lawful Callings, is not forbidden, but commanded; my next Buſineſs muſt be to ſhew you what is forbidden here by theſe Words, *Therefore I ſay unto you, take no thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on.* Here lies the Difficulty; I ſhall not go to clear it without book, but from Obſervations I have made from the Text itſelf. In anſwer to this Enquiry then, I obſerve,

(1.) The original Word in my Text, μεριμνάω, ſignifies a very great exceſſive Care; a Care that fills the Mind, not only giving it a full Employ, but even ſuch as to make it labour under the Weight of that Load. Now this Exceſs of Care about any worldly Thing, is very dangerous. For

1. It

1. It is a Demonſtration that we ourſelves are worldly, and do very little mind a better Life.

2. It is a great Means to make us worldly, and to involve us ſo in worldly Things, that we ſhall grow really incapable of minding better Things.

3. It is an unneceſſary burdening of our own Spirits.

4. It is a Diverſion of our Hearts from thoſe important Concerns of Eternity, and the Way that leads to it, that we have neither Time, nor Diſpoſition for them.

First, This exceſſive minding of the World, is a ſhrewd Sign that we ourſelves are worldly; and that Heaven, and the Way thither, are little in all our Thoughts; for whatever a Man ſets his Mind moſt upon, that will be uppermoſt in his Care and Thoughts. If we obſerve any Man or Woman, *e.g.* to beſtow moſt of their Time at Game, we need no other Proof that they are unmindful of their proper Calling and Buſineſs: And therefore tho' a little Diverſion at Game is excuſable, the making it exceſſive and habitual, is certainly to be condemned, as being a clear Proof that a Man minds nothing that is ſerious, or any Thing to the purpoſe of Life. So it is with this exceſſive Care of the World; it argues that a Man's Heart is enſlaved to it, and conſequently that he is forgetful of better Things. For our Saviour had laid it down before as a Maxim, that *we cannot ſerve God and* Mammon; from which it follows excellently,

Therefore I ſay unto you, take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on: For certainly the one Care, where it is in Exceſs, will eat out the other. And it is but reaſonable that the greater Concern ſhould have moſt of our Time and Thoughts and Care.

Secondly, As this exceſſive Care of the World is a ſhrewd Sign that we are too worldly already, ſo it is a ſure Way to make us more and more ſo; for the Repetition of Acts grows up into Habits; and every Habit, the more it is continued in, the ſtronger it grows, and the leaving it off becomes more and more difficult. The Cares of the World too find ſuch conſtant Employment for the Soul, that there is no room for better Thoughts. The Mind of the worldly Man, is like a full Veſſel, which unleſs it be in ſome Degree emptied, can receive no other Liquor. If ſuch a Man ſets about any of the Duties of Religion, he can't mind what he is about; but his Heart is running after his Covetouſneſs, or ſome of his worldly Projects, that there is ſcarce any Poſſibility of good Things making an Impreſſion upon him.

Thirdly, This exceſſive Care about the World, is an unneceſſary burdening of our own Spirits. We are poor weak Creatures, not able to cope with the uſual and unavoidable Troubles of Life; and therefore to multiply thoſe Troubles to ourſelves, to put our Minds upon the Rack about many Caſes

of

of Want, which perhaps will never happen, and to ſtrain our utmoſt to lay up Wealth for many Years to come, is certainly to overburden our Spirits, and indeed to diſturb and diſtract our Minds, which is the proper Importance of this Word, when applied to the World, which we tranſlate *taking Thought*, in the Text. But

Fourthly, One of the worſt Effects of this exceſſive Care of the World, is that it certainly diverts us from the important Concerns of Eternity, and the Way that leads to it, ſo that we have neither Time nor Diſpoſition for better Things. For he who has his Heart ſo diſtracted with worldly Cares, is in a continual Hurry of Thoughts and Buſineſs, which take him up from Morning till Night, that tho *he riſes early, and goes to Bed late, and eats the Bread of Sorrows all Day long*; either he has no time to ſeek God in Prayer, and to meditate on his holy Word; or during that Time, he is aſſaulted with ſo many Thoughts from the World, interrupting his Devotions, that he cannot poſſibly attend them without Diſtraction, and ſo can have no Pleaſure or Reliſh in them; and his Heart being faſt tied and fettered to this World, his Affections can't mount up to God, and another World. A moſt diſmal State, eſpecially where there is ſo little Hopes of getting out of it.

2. As this Word, μεριμνάω, which we tranſlate *taking Thought*, when applied to the Things of the World, ſignifies an exceſſive Care; it ſignifies

likewiſe a diſtruſtful, or anxious Care; not waiting on God, but exceeding doubtful and diffident of the Event, directly oppoſite to that Advice of St. *Peter*, of (*a*) *caſting all our Care upon him, for he careth for us.* For the anxious Man, when he has done all that is incumbent and proper for him to do, is not at an end of his Trouble, but is ſolicitous about the Event, which is not a thing in his Power. And being it is not in our Power, what can we do better than chearfully to depend on God for it? This is what gives a vaſt deal of Eaſe, and Hope, and Courage, to a good Man's Mind, and makes him hearty in all his Affairs, as the Apoſtle tells us, *Phil.* iv. 6. *Be careful for nothing; or be anxious for nothing*, (it is the ſame Word with that in my Text) *but in every thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known unto God: And the Peace of God, which paſſeth all Underſtanding, ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Chriſt Jeſus.* The anxious Man is ſo troubled with theſe diſtruſtful Cares, that he is ready to betake himſelf to any unlawful Means to get rid of his Fears about theſe Things.

3. In this Caution of taking no Thought, we are diſſwaded from that melancholy Concern, Diſcontent, and Impatience, which is upon the Spirits of worldly Men, when they either meet with, or

(*a*) 1 Pet. v. 7.

fear

fear to meet with any worldly Loſs. An undiſturbed and chearful Dependance on Providence, is recommended to us in oppoſition to this Temper; and for that Reaſon the Example of *the Fowls of the Air* is propoſed, as of a Creature of a light and merry Heart, tho' it lives from Hand to Mouth; and not, as ſome have thought, as an Example of an idle Creature, that does nothing towards its own Subſiſtence.

4. This exceſſive, vexatious, diſtruſtful, and melancholy impatient Care, has another devilliſh Ingredient in it, namely, that it lays aſide the Thoughts of God out of the Scheme, and depends ſolely upon ſecond Cauſes. Our Saviour in ſome Part of this Diſcourſe, charges it with a Want of Faith, and a Forgetfulneſs of God, who feeds the Birds, and clothes the Lillies; *Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?* And in ſome other Part of it, he repreſents it as a Practice of them who were Strangers to the true Religion, nay of them who knew not God: *After all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek, and your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.* So that there is a dormant Atheiſm in all this Practice; either a denying or miſbelieving the Being or Providence of God; or at leaſt a ſtupid Inconſideration as to both. And therefore the beſt Cure of this Diſtemper, is a firm Belief of the Providence of God, and a chearful caſting ourſelves upon it, in the doing of our Duty.

As all theſe Errors relate to the Act of taking Thought, there are two more relating to the Object, this preſent Life.

5. One is that what we are allowed to purſue and mind only with a ſecondary Care, we purſue with a principal and higheſt Degree of Care. The Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of Life we are allowed to take care for, but with a ſubordinate moderate Care; whereas the Buſineſs of another Life, *the one Thing needful*, we are required to mind with the greateſt Concern and Diligence. But we invert this wiſe Order, *the main Thing* we ſcarce mind at all, but on the other leſs neceſſary Things we beſtow our utmoſt Thoughts and Pains. We place Servants above Princes; (a) *We ſee Servants upon Horſes, and make Princes, like Servants, walk afoot.* It is not to be imagined what infinite Diſorders this engages us in, and how prepoſterous it makes all our Care and Concern. I have great reaſon to believe our Saviour had an Eye to this, becauſe in the Antitheſis of this Caution, which follows, he expreſly diſtinguiſhes what was to be ſought *after in the firſt*, and what *in the laſt Place*: *But ſeek ye firſt*, ſays he, *the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things* (meaning worldly Neceſſaries) *ſhall be added unto you.*

(a) Eccl. x. 7.

6. The

6. The other Thing relating to the Object, is, that granting we are allowed to take Thought, that is, to apply ourſelves with ſome Concern to the Supply of our worldly Neceſſities, as much as we have occaſion for the preſent, yet we are by no Means allowed to extend thoſe Cares to any long time to come. This our Lord had in his Eye, in the laſt Part of the Antitheſis: *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow, for the Morrow ſhall take thought for the Things of itſelf; ſufficient unto the Day, is the Evil thereof.* But what is preciſely meant by the Words *to Day* and *to morrow*, is ſomewhat difficult to determine, only in general that thoſe Cares which are more proper hereafter than at preſent, we ought not to load the preſent with them. And that Trouble of the future Time muſt not be anticipated, for two Reaſons: Firſt, becauſe the Time preſent has Trouble enough of its own; and then, becauſe the Time to come, when it comes, will be more proper to ſtruggle with the Difficulties of that Time, than this preſent Time is. We are therefore wiſely to conſider, what Intention of Care the preſent requires, and what may more ſafely be put off to the Time to come, and order our Care accordingly; as to the Succeſs of both chearfully depending on God's Providence.

Thus now I have given you a Deſcription of this inordinate Care and Solicitude, by ſix Characters of it, all taken from the Text itſelf; namely, that

that the Care about earthly Things here condemned, is exceſſive, diſtruſtful of Providence, full of Perturbation of Mind, atheiſtical, prepoſterous, and anticipated in Point of Time. There follow here many Reaſons to enforce this Caution againſt inordinate Cares, which I muſt leave to another Opportunity.

The Sum of what I have ſaid in the Explication of this Caution, is, That we are not prohibited a regular Care, Labour, Induſtry, or Frugality, in the Management of our worldly Affairs, provided that Care be reſtrained within due Bounds. And the due Bounds are, 1*ſt*. That theſe our worldly Cares be not exceſſive, taking up more of our Thoughts and Time than is due to ſuch worthleſs Enjoyments. 2*dly*, That when we have done our Part, we chearfully commit the Succeſs to God's Providence. 3*dly*, That we preſerve a light merry Heart, not impatient, diſcontented, or dejected, when we fall into any Straits or Diſappointments from the World. 4*thly*, That we be ſure to join with our worldly Cares and Projects, a diligent looking up to God for his Bleſſing, and a quiet Submiſſion to his Diſpoſals. 5*thly*, That we ſet our Heart and Affections on the Kingdom of Heaven, and ſeek for that in *the firſt and chief Place*, and other Things in a ſubordinate manner, not ſo as to interfere with that main Purſuit, but ſo as to be ſubſervient to it. 6. *Laſtly*, That having a Competency at preſent, we do not load ourſelves with unne-

unneceſſary Fears or Cares about the future, but caſt all our Cares of ourſelves, Children, and Families upon God, without anticipating the Cares of the future uncertain Time.

There is one Thing will follow as a Corollary from what has been ſaid, That if we are ſo much cautioned againſt inordinate Care about the Neceſſaries of Life, what we ſhall eat, and drink, and wear, there is a great deal more reaſon that we lay aſide all carking Care about the Unneceſſaries and Superfluities of it. *Let us put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof.* O that we were more mindful of *the one thing needful*! Had we our Eye intent upon that Mark, we ſhould be quickly cured of all our rambling and wandering Purſuits of the Vanities of this World. Let us addreſs ourſelves to God for his Grace to enable us ſo to do, ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, (*a*) *Incline my Heart to thy Teſtimonies, and not to Covetouſneſs. Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and quicken thou me in thy Way.* Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *To whom*, &c.

(*a*) Pſalm cxix. 36, 37.

SER-

SERMON XVIII.

MAT. VI. 25.

--- Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?

V. 26. **Behold the Fowls of the Air: For they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?**

The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

AT the last Occasion I explained to you a Caution of our Saviour's against Anxiety, and the inordinate Cares of the World; from these Words, *Therefore I say unto you, Take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall*

ſhall drink, nor yet for your Body what ye ſhall put on. This Caution is enforced with a great many good Arguments, which I intend to conſider as they lie in order.

The firſt Argument againſt Anxiety (which in the Nature of it implies a Diffidence of Providence) is, the Conſideration of God's Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, in creating our Bodies, and in infuſing Life into them, without any of our anxious Care or Solicitude. And why ſhould we think the ſame divine Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs will be wanting in ſupplying us with the neceſſary Means for the Preſervation and Subſtenance of thoſe Lives and Bodies? *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?* For underſtanding the Force of this Argument, let us conſider that there are two Things our Saviour here reprehends.

I. That we are diffident of God's Care as to the Neceſſaries of Life.

II. That we aſſume that Care to ourſelves, which is to be aſcribed to him.

Now the Argument is fitted for both theſe Defects.

For, 1. It is argued that God who has given us Life and Bodies, without any of our Solicitude, will not let his own Work periſh for want of a little Means of Subſiſtence.

2. It

2. It is inſinuated that we do ſo little towards that Subſiſtence, to what God does, that it it our beſt way to depend more on him, and leſs on ourſelves.

I. It is a great Part of Anxiety that we are diffident of God's Care as to the Neceſſaries of Life; and look upon Things, and judge of them no otherwiſe than according to the Probabilities of ſecond Cauſes. God is not conſidered in all the Contrivances of the covetous anxious Man; and unleſs he can ſee through the whole Train of Providences, what way he and his ſhall be provided in all their future, as well as preſent Wants, he is uneaſy, and vexes himſelf; and this occaſions that Load of Cares and Fears, which our Saviour is here arguing againſt.

Now to obviate the Objections, which this diſtruſtful Temper would make, our Lord deſires them here to conſider who it was that reared this curious Frame of our Body, and who infuſed Life into it, and who ſubjected it to all theſe Wants and Neceſſities; and by whoſe Care it is that it is ſupported in its Frame and Conſtitution; whether it ſeems probable that he, who did all this, would abandon ſuch a noble Piece of his Workmanſhip, to periſh for want of a little Victuals and Clothes? So that the Strength of this Argument, as I apprehend it, is founded on theſe following Propoſitions.

1. That

1. That God made our Bodies, and gave us living Souls to animate them, without any of our own Care, much more without any Anxiety of ours.

2. That God created theſe Bodies of ours ſo weak and indigent that they cannot ſubſiſt of themſelves without the Supplies of Food and Raiment, and divers other Neceſſaries: And that it is an Imputation on the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to think that he would make a Creature ſubject to ſo many Wants and Neceſſities, and take no manner of Care how to ſupply them.

3. That it is but a ſmall Part of this Supply which he has left to us, and therefore that we ought not to aſſume the whole; and if we do, we ſhall only fret and vex ourſelves in vain, for that this Vexation of ours will not anſwer the End of ſupplying thoſe Wants; and that all the Part he has aſſigned us in it may be performed with Cheerfulneſs, and therefore that Solicitude and Vexation of Mind is altogether ſuperfluous, and to no manner of Purpoſe.

Theſe are Subjects worthy of our more particular Conſideration.

1. Firſt then, we are to conſider that God made our Bodies, and gave us living Souls to animate them, without any of our own Care, much more without any Anxiety of ours. Had our Bodies been Machines of our own inventing, there might have been ſome Reaſon for our puzzling our Brains how

how to improve the Invention, and how to perpetuate, or at leaſt to lengthen the Motion of them. But when it is an Invention of a wonderful Artificer to our hand, and ſo curious a one, that to this Day after ſo many Ages we can't ſo much as diſcover the vaſt Variety of Parts, Motions and Intentions that belong to it; when he that made it gave it a certain Degree of Motion ſuch as he himſelf thought good; and committed it to our Care not to tamper with it, and alter the Contrivance, but as a Clock is committed to the Care of an unſkilful Man, only at certain times to wind it up, and to preſerve it as clean as he can from Duſt, but as to the main Care of it, to depend upon the Clock maker, and to meddle no further with it but according to his Directions. Now would it not be a ſtrange piece of Folly in this ignorant Man to go and vex himſelf with the Thoughts what he ſhall do, when this Machine is out of order, how he ſhall take it to pieces, and find out and mend what is amiſs, and ſet it all a going again; or yet further, if a fancy ſhould come in his Head, that he could change and better the Faſhion of it, and from its going 24 Hours, bring it to go a Week, and from that to a Month, and from that a Year, and ſo on, till at laſt he ſhould fall upon the Notion of a perpetual Mover? This ſelf-conceited fanciful Man might give himſelf abundance of Uneaſineſs with a vain Conceit of his Skill, and yet be never the nearer; whereas the

Man

Man who confines his Care to ſuch a Proportion and Degree as the Clockmaker preſcribed, but in all extraordinary Caſes depends upon the Maker himſelf, eaſes himſelf of all this needleſs Trouble. Juſt ſo it is with theſe living Machines of ours; the beſt way to be eaſy with them is to trouble ourſelves no further about them than the great Maker of them has directed, that is, by a regular Care in adminiſtring thoſe Materials which he furniſhes us. But if we exceed that, and will meddle with his Part, we ſhall only create abundance of Uneaſineſs to ourſelves, but ſhall be never the nearer as to our Life and Health; but farther off as to both.

2. Let us conſider that God made theſe Bodies of ours ſo frail and weak, and ſubject to ſo many Neceſſities, that he knew very well they could not ſubſiſt of themſelves, without conſtant Supplies of Food and Raiment, and divers other Things; and therefore may well be ſuppoſed to have provided accordingly for them, with our own regular, and without our anxious and ſolicitous Care. They muſt have a very mean Opinion of God's Wiſdom and Providence, who can believe that God formed this Creature, *Man*, ſo curiouſly, and under ſo many Neceſſities, without ſo much as a Fore-thought how thoſe Neceſſities ſhould be ſupplied. This would be like that barbarous Practice of ſome Nations, where they expoſed their Young as ſoon as they were born. The very Reflexion

then on the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the great Creator is enough to convince us that the Preſervation and Subſtenance of his Workmanſhip fall as much under his Care as the making of it.

3. Let us conſider that it is but a ſmall Part of this Supply which God has left to us, to what he has immediately reſerved in his own Hand; and that it is our Part to content ourſelves with our own Share, which if we do, we ſhall be far from Anxiety. To give an Example of this as to the ſupplying us with Bread, let us conſider a little what little hand we have in it, and how entirely it depends on what God reſerves to himſelf, without which all our Labour would be in vain. Suppoſe then God had left us to our own Shifts, and had not endowed the Earth with Fertility, that it had either been hard like a Rock not capable of Cultivation, or being cultivated that it had been ſo barren that it would ſcarce have produced our Seed again. Suppoſe again, if the Earth had been ever ſo fertile, that God had not ſent ſeaſonable Weather, but either ſuch a Drought as to wither, or ſuch exceſſive Rains as to drown, or ſuch cold Froſts as to nip and kill the Fruits of the Ground, or ſuch high Winds and Hurricans, as to beat all our Labour to pieces, what would our poor Huſbandry ſignify in ſuch a Caſe? Or ſuppoſe, let the Earth and Seaſons be ever ſo good, God had made no ſuch Creatures, as the ſeveral Grains, Roots and Herbs, Graſs, and Corn, which

now

now yield us our Food; what would our poor Labour have ſignified? A Baker that bakes the Bread, and a Cook that dreſſes the Victuals might as well pretend to the Care and Honour of providing the Family, when the Meal and Meat are laid in to their hands, as we can, when God furniſhes ſo many Things towards it, and we ſo little. What ſignifies a little Sowing, and Reaping, andGathering into Barns, in compariſon of creating the Grain, furniſhing a Fertility to the Earth, a Seaſonableneſs to the Weather, Heads to contrive, and Hands to work, and Beaſts and Tools to work withal? It is a ſtrange Thing that Man who does the leaſt Part, ſhould aſſume to himſelf all the Care and Honour: And as if he were the chief Architect, ſhould burden himſelf with the whole Contrivance, when he is no better than the ſorrieſt Barrowman about the Building. And this is

II. The ſecond Defect which this Reaſoning is deſigned to remedy, namely, that we aſſume that to ourſelves by this Sin of Anxiety, which is due to God. We aſſume the providing ourſelves with all Neceſſares, and are anxious if we do not compaſs them for a great Time to come, whereas all this is really God's Part, and none of ours. And ſhould therefore be anſwered by taking leſs of the Load upon our own Spirits, and diſburdening all our Cares upon God. Now in order to this I know nothing more proper to recommend to your Conſideration, than that God who made us ſubject to all theſe

Neceſſities doth likewiſe take care to anſwer them, and provide for them. But I ſhall preſs the Conſideration of this no farther than from the Argument in the Text, that he who has contrived to give us Life and Bodies out of his infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, will certainly likewiſe contrive to give us what he has made neceſſary for the Preſervation and Support of that Life and thoſe Bodies; and therefore that we need not trouble ourſelves with any anxious Cares about thoſe Things, but are to content ourſelves with doing our Duty, and to truſt to him for the reſt. To illuſtrate this by a familiar Compariſon: If a wiſe and powerful Prince ſhould raiſe an Army, and tranſport them into a foreign Country, where he has Occaſion to make uſe of their Service in War; would this Army need to fear that this wiſe and powerful Prince, who employs their Time in his military Service, would abandon them to ſtarve in that ſtrange Country, and would not take care to ſubſiſt them with all Things neceſſary for the Service? And would it not be a very fooliſh Thing for the Soldiers of ſuch an Army, inſtead of applying themſelves to the military Service, which is enjoined them, to ſpend their Time in progging and contriving how to provide Ammunition Bread, the Care of which is none of their Province? So God Almighty who ſent us into this World upon his Service, commands us cheerfully to mind that Service, and aſſures us we need not trouble ourſelves about

about our Subſiſtence, but that we are to commit all that Care to him, and quietly to depend upon him for it. By the Help of this Similitude, we may perceive three or four very groſs Errors in this one Sin of Anxiety; namely, 1. A Diſtruſt of God's Care and Providence. 2. An unreaſonable proud Opinion of our own Skill and Conduct. 3. A Neglect of the main Service we ſhould be attending in the mean Time, while we are thus unprofitably employed about other Things, 4. A Vexing ourſelves about ſuch Things as fall not within our Power and Skill; and by the bad Example of our Diſcontent, provoking the Diſcontents of others, and ſo contributing what lies in us to ſtir up a Spirit of Murmuring and Mutiny in the whole Army. Theſe Things are ſo plain that I ſhall not need to inſiſt farther on them; but proceed to what is added for Illuſtration of this Argument.

Behold the Fowls of the Air: For they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? This I take to be a Proſecution of the ſame Argument againſt Anxiety, that God takes care of the Preſervation of his own Workmanſhip; for here an Inſtance is brought of a Creature, that is the leaſt furniſhed with Ability to provide for its own Living; and wants all thoſe Arts of Providence, which Man is furniſhed with, uch as *Sowing, Reaping, and Gathering into Barns*

and Granaries; yet our heavenly Father feedeth them: They live cheerful Lives, though they have nothing laid up for their future Subſiſtence, but live as we ſay from hand to mouth. Then follows the Application of the Simile, *Are not ye much better than they?* The original Word διαφέρω ſignifies to excell; *do not ye much excell them?* And this I think has an Aſpect to two Things; firſt, that we excell them or have the better of them, as being in better Circumſtances to provide for ourſelves than they are in to provide for themſelves; we being capable of many Improvements in Huſbandry and Frugality beyond them; for we can ſow, and reap, and gather into Barns or Granaries, which they can't do: And therefore we have the leſs Reaſon to be anxious or ſollicitous. And this Senſe I think is not to be neglected, as offering itſelf very clearly from the Words, and being exceeding pertinent to the Point in hand. The other Thing to which theſe Words have an Aſpect is that which our Interpreters have followed; namely, the ſuperiour Dignity of our Nature; *Are not ye much better than they?* i. e. are not ye a Creature of more Worth than the Fowls of the Air, and conſequently a Creature that need leſs to fear being abandoned by the divine Providence? Both theſe Senſes of our having the better of the Fowls of the Air are ſo good, that I think they deſerve both to be conſidered.

(1.) That

(1.) That we excell the Fowls of the Air, or have the better of them, in regard of the better Circumſtances we are in to provide for our Wants than they: for that we can and are allowed to ſow, and reap, and gather into Barns, which they can't do. So that it is an Argument not from a Parity of Reaſon; but what we call an Argument *a fortiori*, that there is a great deal more Reaſon that we ſhould not be anxious than the Birds and Fowls of the Air, as being much better able to provide againſt a Time of Scarcity than they. The Thing then recommended to us, when we are commanded to behold the Fowls of the Air, is not to learn of them Idleneſs and Improvidence, but a Cheerfulneſs and Freedom from Anxiety, for which they are exemplary; though they are worſe furniſhed with Means to ſtave off Want than we are. For we muſt never forget the main Inſtruction here recommended, for enforcing of which all theſe are but Arguments, not new Precepts. The not obſerving of this has driven ſome learned Men to give a very wrong Interpretation of this Text; as if, after the Example of the Fowls of the Air and the Lilies of the Field, our Saviour had here forbid all worldly Labour to his Diſciples; and becauſe they were ſenſible this would have been a very unreaſonable Precept, if meant of Chriſtians in general, they have without conſidering the Context, which is a general

Argument againſt Covetouſneſs and the inordinate Cares of the World, limited this Diſcourſe to the twelve choſen Diſciples, the Apoſtles; when in all probability there were no ſuch Officers in Being at the Time of preaching this Sermon, and if there had, there was no ſuch Thing as Idleneſs enjoined them, or elſe we ſhould not have heard of their Neceſſities being ſo often ſupplied by their own handy Labour. Thus we ſee how one ſmall Error is attended with a great many more, and of more dangerous Conſequence. The taking theſe Words, *Behold the Fowls of the Air*, &c. not for an Argument to enforce the Caution againſt Anxiety going before, but for a new Precept, was attended with a wrong placing of the Simile; as if not a Freedom from Anxiety, but the not working at all had been enjoined. Then becauſe this was a Doctrine ſo contrary to right Reaſon and the plain Precepts of Chriſtianity in other Paſſages of Holy Scripture, the ſame Authors found an abſolute Neceſſity of limiting this their ſuppoſed new Precept to the Apoſtles, and to the particular Circumſtances of the Church at that Time. But there is another terrible Conſequence of this Notion, which I believe if theſe learned Authors had reflected on, they would never have broached ſuch a dangerous Doctrine; namely, that it furniſhes all Men, except Apoſtles, with an Handle, to creep out of the Sermon of the Mount, as not being directed

directed to common Chriſtians, but to Men in that higher Station of Apoſtles; than which I know not any greater Wound could have been given to Chriſtian Morals; and which I am ſure, if the Reverend Authors had reflected on, they would never have been guilty of, being ſome of them as zealous Aſſertors of the Purity of Chriſtian Morals as any we have. For by the ſame Rule that they interpret away this Diſcourſe againſt Covetouſneſs and the inordinate Cares of the World from private Chriſtians, and appropriate it to Apoſtles, they may do the ſame by all the reſt of that Sermon, it being all directed to one and the ſame Auditory. But having formerly very fully refuted this Notion, when I conſidered the proper Auditors of this Sermon on the Mount, *viz.* the Multitudes and the Diſciples, proving that by *Diſciples* were meant *all Chriſtians*; I ſhall not now further enlarge upon it, though I judged it neceſſary not to paſs it by, when I am upon the Text upon which they have built this their miſtaken Notion. The Argument then our Saviour here brings from the *Fowls of the Air* I take to run thus. *q. d.* If ſuch poor helpleſs Creatures as the *Fowls of the Air*, that can contribute ſo little towards their own Subſiſtence, either by making their own Grain, or by laying it up againſt a Time of Scarcity, after it is made, are yet provided for by God, and maintained both without Want, and without

without Melancholy, in a cheerful and ſatisfied Manner; how much more Reaſon have ye not to diſtruſt God's Providence, but cheerfully to depend upon it, who are furniſhed far beyond them with many good Ways and Means and Opportunities, by lawful Callings, good Government, Art and Contrivance, to provide for your ſelves and for one another, and to lay up for Times of Want and Scarcity?

There is one Corollary or Inference will naturally riſe from this Argument, which I wiſh were better conſidered; for it would be an excellent Remedy of all our inordinate Cares; it is this; that the more we are furniſhed with Helps and Means againſt Want, ſo much the more ought we to be delivered from Anxiety and Solicitude. And an Obſervation it is highly agreeable with Reaſon, the more we are furniſhed and provided againſt Want, the leſs to fear it. Yet how ſtrange is it to obſerve that the common Practice of Men, eſpecially of covetous Men is directly contrary? elſe, why ſhould many rich Men who have Wealth enough laid up for many Years, be more troubled with anxious and vexatious Cares about the World, than ſeveral poor Men, who tho' they live from hand to mouth yet live cheerfully and contentedly? why ſhould many Old-men, the greater Part of whoſe Life is already paſt, conſequently provided for, be much more anxious and ſolici-

tous

tous about the World, than Young-men whoſe Wants are far greater, and like to be much longer upon their Hands? why are Men who profeſs that they believe a Providence, and know how to addreſs themſelves to God in the Name of Chriſt, and are furniſhed with all Capacities and Endowments of Body and Mind to make uſe of the Means, as anxious and diſtruſtful, as if there were neither a God to provide, nor any Means and Opportunities put into their Hand, to do any Thing towards the Staving off of Want? This is one of the beſt Uſes of Wealth, next to the doing good to others, of any I know; to moderate our own Cares: Not that Riches are to be truſted to for the Supply of our Wants, but that God who gave them may be depended on for the continuing to us a competent Portion out of them, and that Experience as well as Religion and Reaſon doth then teach us to devolve all our Cares upon him who careth for us. So much for the firſt Conſideration of the Words, that we excell the *Fowls of the Air*, as being in better Circumſtances to provide for ourſelves than they, and therefore have leſs Occaſion to be anxious.

(2.) But ſecondly, theſe Words, *Are ye not much better than they?* do ſignify likewiſe the greater Dignity of Men above Fowls, and that upon that Account likewiſe they may expect to be more immediately taken Care of by God's Providence.

Our

Our Saviour purſues much ſuch an Argument as this, *Mat.* x. 29. *Are not two Sparrows,* ſays he, *ſold for a Farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the Ground without your Father; but the very Hairs of your Head are all numbered; fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many Sparrows.* I might illuſtrate this Obſervation of the Dignity of Man by ſeveral Obſervations taken from his Creation, Redemption, Preſervation, and Proviſion. But it is Time to conclude this Argument. Natural Philoſophy has many pretty Things to this purpoſe, ſhewing what wonderful care Nature, or rather the God of Nature has taken for the Maintenance of Individuals, and the Preſervation of the Species; from which one that duly obſerves and conſiders may eaſily learn that there is an infinite wiſe Providence which fits and directs us to our Duty and Buſineſs, and takes Care that in doing that cheerfully and contentedly, we ſhall want none of the Neceſſaries for our comfortable Subſiſtence.

To conclude then, Away with all diſtracting Fears and carking Cares about what we ſhall eat or drink, and wherewithal we ſhall be cloathed; in which ſo many Men beſtow all their Thoughts and Time. (*a*) *The Lord is our Shepherd we ſhall not want. O fear the Lord, ye his Saints: For there*

(*a*) Pſ. xxiii. 1.

is no Want to them that fear him. (*a*) *The young Lions do lack and ſuffer Hunger: but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good Thing.*

Now to this great and good God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

(*a*) Pſ. xxxiv. 9, 10.

SER-

SERMON XIX.

MAT. VI. 27.

Which of you by taking Thought can add one Cubit unto his Stature?

The Seventh Sermon on this Text.

OUR Saviour goes on here with his Arguments againſt Anxiety and the inordinate Cares of the World. One of theſe I conſidered at the laſt Occaſion; taken from the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, that he who made the Body, and gave us our Life, and made us ſubject to ſo many Neceſſities, will likewiſe take Care to ſupply thoſe Neceſſities. This Argument was illuſtrated with this Conſideration that Creatures of far leſs value than

than we, and far worſe furniſhed with Abilities to provide for their own Subſiſtence, to wit, the Fowls of the Air, are provided for by God without Want and without Melancholy; and therefore we have no Reaſon to fear the being abandoned by God's Providence. There is another Argument to the ſame purpoſe, contained in the Words which I have now read, which I intend to conſider as it follows here in order.

The ſecond Argument then againſt Anxiety here uſed by our Saviour is taken from the Uſeleſneſs of this anxious ſuperfluous Care to any of the real Comforts of Life. *Which of you by taking Thought can add one Cubit unto his Stature?* The Word ἡλικία which we tranſlate *Stature*, ſignifies likewiſe *Age*, and eſpecially the moſt flouriſhing Time of one's Age, when we are in the Prime of our Youth and Strength. *Statura, ætas, vigor, adoleſcentia.* (*Græc. Lex.*) And it is this further Notion of the Word which for many Reaſons I chooſe to prefer. For the bare adding a Cubit to the Stature ſeems uncouth, and a Thing which the anxious Man would not deſire; whereas the adding to both Perſonableneſs and Life, eſpecially to the youthful and proſperous Time of it, is a Thing that moſt Men would deſire; and a Thing which the Worldling propoſes to himſelf by his Riches; after all his Care to live bravely, and to have wherewithal to ſupport and comfort him in his Old Age;

Age; (*a*) like the rich Man in the Parable, who is repreſented as promiſing himſelf a great many happy Days, from his plentiful Crops and full Barns: And hugging himſelf with the Fancy of the ſweet Enjoyment of all which ſcarce ever any worldly minded Man arrived at. Our Saviour here ſeems to me to appeal to their own Experience, whether ever they found that was the Effect of their worldly Cares, *q. d.* To what purpoſe is all your Anxiety? can it either lengthen out your Life? or doth it lengthen out your Youth and the more vigorous and flouriſhing Part of your Days? have any of you ever found it ſo by Experience? Theſe are put by Way of Interrogation, implying a ſtrong Negation. But perhaps there is ſomething more deſigned by theſe Queſtions than a bare Negation; it ſeems to me to be an Elegant μειώσις, where leſs is expreſſed than is underſtood; for here is inſinuated that Anxiety is ſo far from making us more perſonable, vigorous or healthy, or our Lives longer or pleaſanter, that it does the quite contrary; it both ſhortens our Days, and by loading thoſe Days with anxious Cares makes them uneaſy and unpleaſant. To do right then to the Text in this, which I apprehend to be the true Senſe of it, I ſhall endeavour to make out theſe two Things.

(*a*) Luk. xii. 19.

I. That

I. That Anxiety, as to the World, is needleſs, as neither adding to Life, nor to the comfortable Part of it, but is rather hurtful to both.

II. That a Chearfulneſs and Reſignation, which are the quite contrary to Anxiety, are of great uſe in all the Parts of Life.

I. That Anxiety, as to the World, is needleſs, as neither adding to Life, nor to the comfortable Part of it, but is rather hurtful to both. Our Saviour had before ſhewed the Inconſiſtency of Covetouſneſs and Religion; *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Now he comes to ſhew the Unfitneſs of worldly Anxiety, as to all the Comforts even of this Life; for it neither adds to the Length of our Lives, nor protracts the chearful and proſperous Part of them. Firſt, Anxiety does not add to the Length of our Lives. For tho the worldly Man forgets the Shortneſs of Life, and takes pains, and toils, as if he were to live here for ever, yet his Death is not put off one Hour the longer; it only comes upon him with ſo much greater Surprize; the Effect of which is, that he is ſo much more unwilling to leave the World, and ſo much the more unprepared for it, but yet muſt leave it notwithſtanding, as ſoon as if he had not been ſo loaded with worldly Cares. Nay, it is more than probable, that Anxiety, by involving Men in endleſs

Cares and Troubles, ſhortens their Days, and brings them to their Grave before their Time; I mean before the Time to which they might have lived, if they had lived more chearful Lives, with Minds diſburdened and diſentangled from worldly Cares: For immoderate Care and Anxiety, brings on Melancholy and Trouble; and as the Body and Mind have a mutual Influence on each other, Trouble of Mind often cauſes Diſeaſes of the Body, which ſhorten a Man's Days. It has been often ſeen, that a very covetous Man, meeting with any conſiderable, nay inconſiderable Loſs and Diſappointment, or even but a great Fright of Loſs, has ſo laid it to Heart, that he has ſickened and died upon it. We have an Example of this in *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 37. When his Wife told him the Danger he had incurred through his Covetouſneſs, provoking *David* to ſuch a Degree, that he and his Men had been upon the March to deſtroy him and his, but that ſhe prevented it by a timely Preſent; he was ſo ſtruck with Fear and Apprehenſion of the Danger he had been in, that he was immediately ſeized with a deep Melancholy; it is ſaid *his Heart died within him, and he became as a Stone.* And ten Days after he died in good earneſt. Many a covetous Man has thus broken his Heart upon worldly Loſſes and Diſappointments; and tho they do not all ſo immediately die, yet no doubt by Degrees worldly Cares will break the beſt Conſtitution, eſpecially where they meet with great Loſ-

ſes,

ſes, Frights, and Diſappointments, as the World is full of ſuch.

And as Anxiety doth not lengthen, but is very apt to ſhorten Mens Lives, let us conſider in the next Place, Whether it is apt to make their Lives eaſy, flouriſhing, and proſperous; for ſo the Word ἡλικία, likewiſe ſignifies Youth, or the flouriſhing, vigorous Part of Life. Now it is well known, that Anxiety about the World, is ſo far from contributing to the Mirth and Verdure of Life, that there is nothing ſooner haſtens Sorrows and grey Hairs; nothing is a greater Enemy to Mirth and Good-humour, nothing ſooner alters the Conſtitution of both Body and Mind, involving a Man in endleſs Troubles and Cares, that if he enjoys Life, he enjoys but few of the Comforts and Conveniencies of it. And therefore *Solomon* very often exhorts to a chearful Uſe of the World while we have it, as the Comfort and Portion a Man has from all his Labour; and guards us againſt the Humour of ſcraping and gathering for thoſe that come after.

II. As Anxiety doth both ſhorten our Days, and make them more uneaſy, ſo, as I told you, was elegantly inſinuated in the Queſtion, Chearfulneſs, Reſignation, and Freedom from Anxiety, contribute exceedingly both to the Length and Felicity

of our Lives in this World. (a) *A merry Heart*, ſays *Solomon*, *doth good like a Medicine, but a broken Spirit drieth the Bones.* Now that this inward Joy, this Freedom from troubleſome anxious Thoughts, is a ſovereign Remedy againſt all the Diſaſters of Life, is what I ſhall here endeavour to evince, and on that Account to recommend it to your Study and Practice.

Firſt In general it will be granted that whatſoever Troubles do beſet us, they are either Things within our own Power to remedy, or not. If they are within our own Power to remedy, there is no Temper of Mind ſo fit to apply thoſe Remedies, as the chearful reſigned Temper; for inſtead of ſitting down with a lazy or melancholy folding of the Hands together, inſtead of giving all up with a dejected Deſpondency, one of that Temper tries the utmoſt that can be done either by Prayers or Endeavours, and does not only patiently, but pleaſantly and contentedly wade through the Difficulties of it. But that it may more diſtinctly be apprehended what Advantage this chearful reſigned Temper has above the ſolicitous and anxious one, to wreſtle with the Difficulties of Life, I ſhall inſtance in ſome Particulars, which unfit the anxious Man for going chearfully through the Buſineſs of

(a) Prov. xvii. 22.

Life,

Life, but are eaſily overcome by the chearful Man, who puts his Truſt in God's Providence.

(1.) Then, it muſt be confeſſed, that he who believes a Concurrence of Divine Providence with his own Endeavours, acts with another ſort of Life and Vigour, than the Man that goes only upon his own Skill and Strength. As a General, who has a gallant Army to back him, marches on with another gueſs Courage than he who has but a ſmall Handful of Men, or perhaps is ſurprized all alone. The ſame may be ſaid of him, who not confiding in God's Aid, torments himſelf to ſtruggle with the Difficulties of Life, purely upon his own Skill and Strength; it is no wonder if he is confounded in his Judgment, and cowardly in his Attempts, and fearful of the Event, to what a good chearful Man is, who puts his Truſt in God's Providence. It is wonderful to obſerve what an Alacrity and Courage this Belief inſpires into Men, when they go upon Dangers. This was what animated *David* when he went againſt *Goliah*; *Thou comeſt to me*, ſays he, *with a Sword, and with a Spear, and with a Shield; but I come unto thee in the Name of the Lord of Hoſts, the God of the Armies of Iſrael, whom thou haſt defied.* (*a*)

(2.) As the chearful Man, who is free from Anxiety, goes upon his Buſineſs with more Courage,

(*a*) 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

ſo he takes much more Pleaſure and Satisfaction in it; he ſucks Honey even out of the bittereſt Herbs; whereas the anxious Man is continually uneaſy; either he knows not what Means to apply, or he is always diffident of the Event, and never perfectly quiet and eaſy within himſelf. What is ſaid of wicked Men in general, is true of him in particular; (a) *The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt; there is no Peace, ſaith my God, to the Wicked.*

(3.) If Difficulties and Troubles occur in Buſineſs, as indeed the World is full of them, the anxious Man, inſtead of bearing them with Patience, magnifies and multiplies them in his own Mind, by his diſturbed Imagination, and ill-boding Fears, and other vexatious Thoughts; whereas the chearful Man, who is clear from Anxiety, has a great deal of reaſon ſtill to hope for the beſt; and tho' he can't ſee through all the Intricacy and Difficulty he may meet with in his Affairs, yet being conſcious to himſelf of the Honeſty and Goodneſs of his Deſigns, and having a firm implicit Faith in God, he is not diſordered or diſcompoſed in his Thoughts, knowing that God, if he ſees it beſt for him, will bring it to paſs whatever he is about; or if he ſees it will prove to his Hurt, will diſappoint him in that Particular, but will anſwer his

(a) Iſa. lvii. 20.

Expec-

Expectation in general, and make all Things cooperate for his good. *Commit thy Way unto the Lord,* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs. Truſt in the Lord, and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed. The Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his Way.* And to the ſame purpoſe *Solomon* adviſes, *Prov.* xvi. 3. *Commit thy Works unto the Lord, and thy Thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* So that the Man who is free from Anxiety, has an eaſy way of diſburdening his Spirits of all Trouble, by devolving all his Cares and Concerns upon God, and quietly waiting his Determination, which he is aſſured will be better than his own Choice.

From what has been ſaid, it will, I hope, appear, that all thoſe Troubles, to the Removal of which our own Endeavours can contribute any thing, the Man who is free from Anxiety, has much the Advantage as to the true Pleaſures and Satisfaction of Life, that he has Eaſe in his own Mind, and that thereby he lengthens out the Tranquility of his Life, and by that Means perhaps Life itſelf; whereas the anxious worldly Man takes the readieſt way, by his fretting and vexing, his carking and caring, to diſquiet his own Mind and Life, and either to ſhorten his Days, or to ſhorten the Mirth or Proſperity of them, or both. So much for thoſe Troubles of Life, which are within our own Power to remedy. But then

Secondly, There are a great many other Troubles which are altogether out of our reach, and which we can no way think of removing, and muſt therefore be patiently endured, if we intend any Peace and Quiet with reſpect to them. Now as to all theſe, the chearful Man, who is free from anxious and ſolicitous Thoughts, has much the Advantage from the Temper of his Mind, to live eaſy and quiet under them; for the Virtue of Contentment, which exerciſes itſelf chiefly in a quiet and chearful bearing ſuch Misfortunes as we can't help, as it goes much againſt the Grain with the anxious Man, ſo it is exceedingly eaſy to a Man of a chearful reſigned Temper. Now Life is full of ſuch Diſaſters, Misfortunes, and Calamities, for which there is really no other Remedy but Chearfulneſs and Contentment. I can't pretend to enumerate them, but ſhall give you ſome Inſtances, that from them ye may gueſs how the anxious Man would manage them; whereas, without Anxiety, they are all eaſy to be managed with Patience, Contentment, and Chearfulneſs, which are the Reverſe of this Anxiety. Of this Sort then are the Diſproportion of Features, the Diſagreableneſs of Complexion, the Loſs or Weakening of any of the Senſes, the exceſſive either Tallneſs or Shortneſs of Stature, the Meanneſs of ones Birth, the Miſcarriage or Misfortune of ones Relations, the Sicklineſs of our Conſtitution, the Weakneſs or Dulneſs of our Underſtanding, the Shortneſs of our Memory, the Defects

Defects of our Education, the Death of our Friends, the being unequally yoked, Loſſes and Diſappointments by Weather, Sea, bad Debtors, falſe Friends, and malicious Enemies; the Inconveniencies of bad Climates, the Defects of Governments and Governours, the Oppreſſions and Injuſtices of the Great, the Groans and Miſeries of the Poor, the Sickneſſes, Plagues, and Diſtempers that rage in the World; and in many Caſes Poverty, bad Neighbours, and the Frowns of Government, and a great many other Things which attend our Circumſtances in this Life, which it is not in the Power of Men, far leſs of any one Man, with all his Anxiety or Solicitude, to remedy or prevent: And therefore the Way to be happy under them, is by Patience, Reſignation, and Contentment, to make ourſelves as eaſy as we can, with an implicit Faith in the Goodneſs of God, that he will lay no more upon us, than he will give us Strength to bear; and eſpecially to ſupport our Spirits with the Hopes of a better Life; and not by Vexation and Anxiety, to ſtruggle, to no purpoſe, with a Load much too heavy for us.

As I have made this out in general, that a Freedom from Anxiety contributes moſt both to the lengthening and to the ſweetning of our Days, I might bring many particular Proofs of the ſame Truth; I might ſhew how neceſſary Chearfulneſs is to make the Chariot Wheels of Action go glib, whereas with Trouble and Anxiety they draw very heavily,

heavily, and ſoon tire our Spirits. I might ſhew that Melancholy and Anxiety embitters all the Comforts of Life, but a chearful Mind makes every thing pleaſant: (*a*) *All the Days of the Afflicted are evil*, ſays *Solomon*, *but he that is of a merry Heart hath a continual Feaſt.* I might ſhew how impoſſible it is to bear up againſt the ſeveral Calamities of Life, without a Belief of Providence. I might ſhew you how Anxiety, as it embitters our Comforts, ſo it aggravates all our Troubles. But having offered what is ſufficient to make out the Doctrine of the Text, I ſhall rather chuſe to conclude by making ſome good Uſe of it, for our further Edification.

Uſe I. The firſt Uſe I ſhall make of this Doctrine, is to obſerve from our Saviour's uſing this Argument taken from the Length and Proſperity of Life, how deſirous he is that we ſhould make our Lives as eaſy as we can with a good Conſcience. As there are three ſorts of Troubles, *External*, *Internal*, and *Eternal*; to keep us from the *Eternal* ones, is the Deſign of thoſe many excellent Precepts of the Goſpel, which he has taught us; and to keep us from *Internal* Troubles by Sins and worldly Cares, he has likewiſe adapted a great many particular Precepts, as, namely, this againſt Anxiety; from which he diſſwades, not only on

(*a*) Prov. xv. 15.

account

accouut of its being dangerous to our Souls, but likewiſe as deſtroying the Comforts of this Life. And as for *External* Troubles, tho we are always taught to chuſe Suffering before Sin, yet if we can avoid it without Sin, I do not ſee but that our Saviour adviſes us ſo to do: (*a*) *When they perſecute you in one City*, ſays he, *flee to another*. Now there are two Sorts of Troubles our Saviour encourages us here to avoid; the inward Trouble of our own Minds, occaſioned by Anxiety and carking Care; and the external Trouble which that exceſſive Care occaſions; which, by the Argument in my Text, deſtroys all the Comfort of Life. As to the external Care, it ought to be moderate; and for the internal, we ſhould not diſcompoſe ourſelves about theſe outward Things. (*b*) *I would have you without Carefulneſs*, ſays St. *Paul*; *without Carefulneſs*, tho not *without Care*; without a vexatious Care, tho not without an induſtrious Care.

Uſe II. From this Doctrine we may obſerve what a wrong Way the World takes to make themſelves eaſy and happy; they fancying that all Happineſs conſiſts in Riches, take an infinite deal of Pains to acquire them at any rate. But they are in this under a double Error; *firſt*, That they endure a great deal of Miſery in the mean time, by the unneceſſary Care and Anxiety which they undergo.

(*a*) Mat. x. 23. (*b*) 1 Cor. vii. 32.

And

And *ſecondly*, That they are utterly deceived in the Happineſs they expected from Riches; which, except they be joined with a liberal Heart to employ them to good Uſes, are rather a Curſe than a Bleſſing.

Uſe II. From this Doctrine we may learn the great Duty of Contentment, and a chearful Mind; which is to be acquir'd not by encreaſing our Fortune, but by curbing and moderating our Deſires. We ſee from all our Saviour ſays about Anxiety, that it is good for nothing; it is inconſiſtent with the Service of God; *we cannot ſerve God and* Mammon; it is inconſiſtent with the Felicity of this Life, it both ſhortens our Life in general, and the proſperous flouriſhing Part of it in particular. We may well ask the Queſtion then, as *Solomon* doth, *Eccl.* ii. 22. *What hath a Man of all his Labour, and of the Vexation of his Heart wherein he hath laboured under the Sun? For all his Days are Sorrows, and his Travel Grief, yea his Heart taketh not reſt in the Night.* He anſwers there that *this alſo is Vanity*; and concludes that there is nothing better, as to this World's Felicity, than the contrary Practice, of not being a Drudge to the World, but both uſing it for the various Occaſions of Life, and taking Pleaſure in that Uſe, for that this is the Gift of God.

And it is no wonder that both in the Old and New Teſtament, we are ſo much cautioned againſt theſe exceſſive Cares of the World, and exhorted

to

to a chearful Uſe of it, and a Moderation of our Deſires after it, ſince it is found by conſtant Experience, that nothing is more pernicious either to the Care of our Souls, and the Concerns of a better Life, or to our Peace and Happineſs in this World, than theſe anxious Cares, engaging the Mind in a perpetual Drudgery day and night, and leaving us neither Time nor Inclination for better Things; whereas, on the contrary, a Mind delivered from theſe Encumbrances, is a fit Soil for receiving the Seeds of all Virtue, and for bringing forth the due Fruits of it. (*a*) *In ſome thirty, in ſome ſixty, and in ſome an hundred fold.* It will be but a poor Excuſe to ſay, I take all this Pains for my Heir, I ſhall leave it to him, and he may do more good with it than I have done, if he pleaſes. This is juſt the Deſcription *Solomon* gives of the worldly Wretch, having immediately before given a quite contrary Character of a good Man. *Eccl.* ii. at the laſt Verſe, *For God giveth to a Man that is good in his Sight,* ſays he, *Wiſdom and Knowledge and Joy; but to the Sinner he giveth Travel, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God.* To conclude, pray let us all remember that the Time is faſt approaching, when the richeſt Miſer ſhall in vain wiſh that he had not left the doing of good to his Heirs; but

(*a*) Mat. xiii. 8.

according

according as God had enabled him, that he had contrived to do good himſelf; *to be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up for himſelf a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that he might have laid hold on eternal Life.* And O that all of us would conſider in this our Day the Things that belong to our everlaſting Peace, before the Time come that they be hid from our Eyes.

God of his infinite Mercy give us all Grace ſo to do; and to him be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, for ever. *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON XX.

MAT. VI. 28.

And why take ye Thought for Raiment? Conſider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin.

V. 29. **And yet I ſay unto you, that even** Solomon, **in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe.**

V. 30. **Wherefore if God ſo clothe the Graſs of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?**

The Eighth Sermon on this Text.

IN theſe Words our Saviour continues the former Subject he was upon againſt Anxiety, and the inordinate Cares of the World; only as what went before had an Aſpect to that Part of our neceſ-

neceſſary Subſiſtence, which conſiſts in eating and drinking, this which I have now read relates chiefly to our Clothing; and the Deſign of it is to ſhew us that God's Providence relates to our Clothing as well as to our Victuals, which by a moderate Care and Induſtry, but without Anxiety and Solicitude, with God's Bleſſing, we may eaſily provide for ourſelves. In the Words we may obſerve theſe three Things.

I. A Reprehenſion of our Anxiety, and Diſtruſt of Providence as to our Raiment: *And why take ye Thought for Raiment?*

II. An Argument to convince us of God's Care in clothing his Creatures, taken from the glorious Apparel of the wild Lilies: *Conſider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow.*

III. An Application of this Argument to the Caſe of anxious diſtruſtful Men, *a fortiori*, in four Particulars.

(1.) That the Lilies can do nothing for themſelves, towards their own Clothing, we can. *They toil not, neither do they ſpin.* The Word which we render Toil, in the (*a*) Original ſignifies only Huſ-

(*a*) κοπιᾶν.

bandry

bandry Labour, it is not taken in an ill Senſe. *q. d.* They can go through none of the Labour neceſſary for making Cloth, neither the Field or Huſbandry Labour, as for example, in ſowing and gathering the Flax and Cotton, nor the Houſe Labour, in working it up, both which we can do.

(2.) That they are Creatures of a much ſhorter Continuance, and of far leſs Uſe than we; and therefore we may much more expect to be taken Care for by God's Providence than they. *Wherefore if God ſo clothe the Graſs of the Field, which to Day is, and to Morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you?*

(3.) We may eaſily obſerve that God's Providence extends to Clothing, becauſe this Clothing, which without their Induſtry he beſtows on the wild Lilies, doth in Fineneſs and Splendour much exceed the richeſt Clothing invented by human Art. *I ſay unto you that even* Solomon *in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe.*

(4.) In this Application our Dulneſs in not obſerving, and our Infidelity in not believing theſe Things, and our Diffidence in not truſting to them is reprehended in theſe Words; *O ye of little Faith!* Theſe are the ſeveral Parts of the Text, which I intend to explain and recommend to your Conſideration at this Time, in the ſame Order, in which I have propoſed them.

I. The firſt Thing I take notice of in the Words, is, a Reprehenſion of our Anxiety and Diſtruſt of

Providence, as to our Raiment. *And why take ye thought for Raiment?* I ſay, in theſe Words are reprehended an Anxiety, and a Diſtruſt of Providence; an Anxiety, in the original Word μεριμνάω, which as I told you before when applied to worldly Things ſignifies not a moderate, but an exceſſive, vexatious Care, which we properly call Anxiety and Solicitude. A Diſtruſt of Providence is likewiſe implied in this Queſtion, which will be plain if we conſider how the Sentence ends, *O ye of little Faith!* Now that Man's Anxiety reaches to Raiment, as well as Victuals, is too plain almoſt in all ſorts of Men. The Poor, though their Clothes are not coſtly, yet conſidering more their own narrow Circumſtances than the Providence of God, are much concerned where to find new Clothes, when the old ſhall be worn out. And the richer Sort, though they have enough to buy Clothes for their Neceſſity, if that would content them, yet ſtriving to vye with one another in the Richneſs and Coſtlineſs of Apparel, they are as often put to it to ſatisfy the Demands of Luxury, as the Poor are to ſatisfy the Demands of Neceſſity: Eſpecially if what is here ſaid of Raiment, may be extended to all other Things that are requiſite to guard us againſt the Injuries of Weather, ſuch as Houſes and Furniture, in which Luxury has run to ſuch an Height, that it is really very difficult for a moderate Fortune to keep pace with the exceſſive Faſhions, which are introduced. But that Anxiety

in

in both theſe ſorts of Perſons deſerves to be reprehended may appear I think from a ſhort Conſideration of this Queſtion; *And why take ye thought for Raiment?* For firſt, as to the Poor; I would deſire them to remember and conſider who has taken Care of them as to that Part of their Life which is paſt, when they were Young and could not take Care of themſelves; how were they then provided in Clothes and all Neceſſaries? Perhaps they will ſay, by the Charity of good People, or by the Care and Induſtry of their Parents, who are now dead and gone. But is not God able to raiſe up from time to time more charitable and good People? Doth not he often find us new Friends, when the old are gone, ſo that we may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, (*a*) *When my Father and my Mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up?* Or are we not perhaps abler now to do for ourſelves than we were then? Let us then with cheerful, not anxious Minds, go about our lawful Buſineſs; and never doubt but that we ſhall find Neceſſaries. (*b*) *Truſt in the Lord and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed.* But then, as to thoſe who are in better Circumſtances, or whoſe Minds perhaps aim at living higher than their Fortune will allow; the proper Advice to them is to bring

(*a*) Pſ. xxvii. 10. (*b*) Pſ. xxxvii. 3.

their Mind to their Circumſtances, which is the only Way to be happy, to cut their Coat according to their Cloth, and to ſupply themſelves cheerfully with Neceſſaries ſuitable to their Ability and Circumſtances. And therefore why ſhould ye be anxious for Raiment? But I proceed to conſider

II. Secondly, Our Saviour's own Argument in the Text, for truſting God's Providence in this Buſineſs of Raiment. *Conſider the Lilies of the Field*, ſays he, *how they grow*. There are many wonderful Things might be learned from the Works of Creation, if we had Skill enough to underſtand their Excellencies, and were careful to make our Obſervations: for they bear the Marks and conſequently the Proofs of God's Wiſdom, and are far ſuperiour for Shapelineſs and Beauty to the fineſt Works of Art. As to this of Clothing, our Saviour might have inſtanced in ſeveral Creatures of greater Dignity, that God has furniſhed with very convenient Clothing, of Hair, Wool, Furres or Feathers, and has endowed them with admirable Skill of providing their own Neſts and Dens in the convenienteſt Manner for themſelves and their Young; and to ſome of them the Sagacity to ſhift their Seats into a warmer or colder Climat according to the various Seaſons of the Year; and the Conſtitution of their own Bodies, and thoſe of their Brood; which are clear Proofs of an overruling

ruling Providence. But he choſe rather to inſtance in a Creature of leſs Dignity than the animal Kind; namely, among the Vegetables, both to make the Argument the ſtronger; for if God takes Care of the ſmalleſt Things, the minuteſt Parts of the Creation, he will certainly take much more Care of the more worthy and noble Parts of it; and likewiſe to caſt the greater Slur on the common Vanity of fine Clothes, inſtancing in ſuch Parts of the Creation, as Man with all his Wealth and all his Vanity can't equal for Fineneſs. *Conſider*, ſays he, *the Lilies of the Field*; ſome think by the *Lilies* he means *the Tulips*, which are many of them extraordinary glorious for Beauty of Colours, mixed with ſuch Exactneſs and Variety, that no human Artiſt can come near them; or whether he means the common white or blue Lilies, or in general all fine Flowers; for they are all Proofs of a Glory and Neatneſs of Clothing beyond any that the moſt Sumptuous that way can reach. And if they appear ſo to our naked Eye, which can't diſtinguiſh the ſeveral Excellencies of Things ſo well as by the Help of Microſcopes, the Thing is much plainer by the Aſſiſtance of thoſe Inventions; for by the Microſcope it appears, that whatever is natural is adorned with all imaginable Elegance and Beauty. There are ſuch inimitable Gildings and Embroideries about ſeveral of thoſe Works of God, as no Man were able to conceive, without ſeeing of them: Whereas the moſt curious Works

of Art, the ſharpeſt fineſt Needle, for example, doth appear to them who have thoſe Helps of the Sight, as a blunt rough Bar of Iron; the moſt accurate Engravings or Embroideries ſeem ſuch rude, bungling deformed Works, as if they had been done with a Mattock or a Trouel. So vaſt a Difference there is betwixt the Skill of Nature, and the Rudeneſs and Imperfection of Art.

III. The third Thing I obſerved in the Words, is, the Application of this Argument to the Caſe of anxious, diſtruſtful Men in four Particulars.

(1.) If the lower Creatures, who can do nothing towards their own Clothing, are ſo gloriouſly clad; then there is little Reaſon for us to be anxious about Clothing, who are endowed with ſo much Skill and Dexterity to provide Clothing for ourſelves. They toil not, neither do they ſpin, ſays our Saviour; the Word, which we render *Toil*, ſingifies, as I told you, the Huſbandry Labour in the Field, as the Spinning is brought as an Inſtance of the Houſe Labour about ſpinning, weaving and dreſſing the Cloth. So that it is much ſuch an Argument as he uſed a little before as to *the Fowls of the Air*, their being provided with Victuals, it was ſaid, *They ſow not, they reap not, they gather not into Barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them*; to ſhew what an Advantage we have of them, that we can contribute ſo much to our own Subſiſtence, *by ſowing, reaping and gathering into*

Barns

Barns or Granaries, and therefore have the leſs Reaſon to fear Hunger. Not that ſowing, reaping and gathering into Barns were in the leaſt deſigned to be diſcouraged; but only that it was a very proper Argument againſt Anxiety, that *the Fowls of the Air* are provided for without Want and without Melancholy, though they are acquainted with none of the Arts of Huſbandry, which is ſo uſeful towards providing of Food, as we are. Now in the ſame Manner is this Argument made uſe of againſt Anxiety of clothing in the Text; that the Lilies are ſo nobly clothed, though they are ſtrangers to the whole Art of making Clothes, both the Field Labour about Flax, Hemp, Cotton, Mulberry Trees, for the Silkworm, or whatever other Parts of it are to be diſpatched by hard Labour; and the nicer Houſe-Part of ſpinning, and weaving, and dying, and dreſſing, and making; not that it is in the leaſt deſigned that any Thing ſhould be ſaid to diſcourage thoſe uſeful Trades of good Huſbandry and good Huſwifry: but only that ſince Men and Women can do ſo much towards their own Clothing they have leſs Reaſon for Anxiety, than if it were a Thing wholly out of their Power.

(2.) Another Way that this Doctrine is applied *a fortiori* to anxious Men is this, that the Lilies are Creatures of far leſs worth, uſe or continuance than we; and therefore we may much more expect to be taken Care of by God's Providence. *Where-*

fore if God ſo clothe the Graſs of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith! What is here called *the Graſs* may as well be rendred *Herbs*; the Word comprehends all Manner of Plants, Flowers and Herbs; now they are ſaid to be caſt into the Oven, becauſe that in many Places, when they are dry, they heat the Ovens with them. But the Word ſignifies likewiſe *a Still*, ſo that perhaps the Meaning may be that they are put into the Still to be diſtilled, to extract a Spirit or an Oil from them. Both ways it anſwers our Saviour's Intent; for ſtill they are very ſhort liv'd Creatures, and the Notion we have of God's Wiſdom ſhould teach us, that he will take moſt Care of that Creature which is moſt uſeful; and beſides theſe inferiour Creatures being made for the Uſe of Man, it is but reaſonable to think, that Man ſhould be much preferred to them, whoſe Servants they are. Here then is a Thing which ought to be a great Support to our Faith in God's Providence, that of that great Number of Creatures at firſt made by God, there is not one of the Species yet loſt, and that the vaſt Number of Individuals is all taken Care of, and wonderfully ſupplied in their ſeveral Kinds; ſo that it muſt be a great Piece of Incogitancy or Infidelity in us, to think that God would abandon ſuch a Piece of his own Workmanſhip as Man is, that he ſhould not be clothed, when there is

not

not the meaneſt Part of the Creation, but what is.

(3.) A third Way that this Doctrine is applied againſt Anxiety in the Text is, with relation to the Fineneſs of the Clothing. For the anxious Man may be apt to think, cheap and coarſe Clothing perhaps I may make a ſhift to compaſs; but how to get good decent faſhionable Apparel and Furniture, ſuitable to my Quality and Station, that is what I fear I ſhall not be able to compaſs. But even this Objection is prevented in the Text. *I ſay unto you*, ſays he, *that even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of theſe.* To ſhew you that God is no niggarldly Provider, but that he beſtows upon all his Creatures good decent, convenient Clothing, and upon ſome of them very rich and fine Clothing, I give you an Inſtance here in the Vegetables, which the richeſt King in all his Splendour could not equal. But as this Conſideration of the Richneſs of the Apparel is deſigned to obviate our Anxiety; ſo I doubt not but that it is deſigned likewiſe to caſt a ſlur upon the Vanity of Apparel, ſince it is a Thing of ſo little Eſtimation in the Sight of God, that he beſtows it in the higheſt Degree upon the meaneſt of his Creatures. For it is to be preſumed had it been a Thing of any great worth in itſelf, inſtead of beſtowing thoſe admirable Varieties of Colours, Gildings and Embroideries upon Tulips, he would have beſtowed them on Creatures of greater Dignity;

nity: Whereas on Mankind he has beſtowed but very ſparingly of theſe gaudy Colours and Features, a great Part of *them* being black, a great Part tauny, and a great Part of other wan and duſky Complexions; to ſhew that it is not the outward gaudy Beauty that he values, but the Ornaments of the Mind, Chriſtian Graces and Virtues, which in his Sight are of great Price.

(4.) Fourthly, In this Application our Dulneſs in not obſerving, our Infidelity in not believing theſe Things, and our Diffidence in not truſting God, without Anxiety, are reprehended in theſe Words; *O ye of little Faith!* There are many Things in our Actions which it is impoſſible to reconcile with our Principles; from which one might be apt to conclude that we have no Faith: For example, our Ignorance or Unbelief as to the Doctrine of Providence, our acting in many Things as if there were no God to mind us, or that would ever call us to Account for our Actions. But our Saviour here more juſtly imputes it to a Scantineſs in the Degree, rather than to a total Deprivation of Faith: *O ye of little Faith!* It would be a very uſeful Study to obſerve the ſeveral Effects of a ſtrong and weak Faith, that we may be guarded againſt the one, and encouraged to purſue after the other. But the Littleneſs of Faith here ſpoke of ſeems to me to be only the Want of a full Truſt in God, which occaſions this Anxiety; for if we have not a firm Truſt in him, that we doing our

Duty

Duty he will provide us in all Neceſſaries, and if our Faith as to that Matter depends upon the Probabilities or Improbabilities of ſecond Cauſes, we ſhall be full of wavering and doubtfulneſs in our own Minds, and the Arguments to undeceive us, inſtead of making a full Impreſſion will take but a ſlender hold, and conſequently will be ſoon forgot, and the contrary Temptations to Anxiety and worldly Mindedneſs will be apt to prevail.

In order then to guard us againſt all Anxiety about the World from the Conſideration of the Arguments here managed by our Saviour, taken from *the Fowls of the Air, and the Lilies of the Field*, it will be neceſſary that we be rightly grounded in a firm Belief that the World and all the Creatures in it did not come by chance, but were made by God, and by him endowed with the ſeveral Virtues and Powers which they enjoy, and likewiſe are ſo preſerved and governed by him, that they ſerve for thoſe wiſe Ends and Purpoſes, ordinary and extraordinary, for which he has appointed them. It would be too tedious now in the end of a Sermon, to ſet about the particular Proof of theſe Things; yet becauſe all this Doctrine of our Saviour's in my Text, depends on a particular Belief both of God's Creation and Providence, I ſhall therefore conclude, by refreſhing your Memories with a brief Demonſtration of this Doctrine.

The

The Scripture ſuppoſes the Being of God, and contents itſelf to tell us how the World and all Things in it were created by him. That the ſeveral Beings in the World did not create themſelves is very plain, becauſe they are not able to preſerve themſelves in Being. And that ſenſeleſs Matter ſhould ever by chance run together into this regular Frame of the World, and ſhould continue to act ſo regularly muſt involve ſuch an Heap of Contradictions, that it is a thouſand Times eaſier to conceive, that the Earth, and Shells, and Trees, and Glaſs, and Iron had a Conſultation together to make themſelves into Bricks and Lime and proper Scantlings, and Nails and Windows and Shingles, and each of them to take his proper Place, and ſo make this Church, without any other Artificer; than that all the Materials of this World could run together, to make this glorious Frame of Heaven and Earth and all the curious Inhabitants thereof. They muſt then have had a Maker, of infinite Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, and that Maker is God.

As God made the World he preſerves and governs the ſame by his Providence. His Providence reaches to all, even the very minuteſt of his Creatures, preſerving them in their Beings, and providing all Things neceſſary for their Subſiſtence, while he thinks fit to continue them in Being. Some of them he continues in Being from the beginning to the end of the World; as the Sun,

Moon

Moon and Stars. To others he aſſigns but a ſhort Time for their Duration here, but he gives them a Power of preſerving their Species, by Propagation of other Individuals of the ſame kind, ſo that there is not one Species known to be loſt from the Beginning of the World to this Day. Now that this Work of Preſervation of the ſeveral Creatures is Gods, and that being in his Hands it will certainly be well performed, the Holy Scriptures give us ſufficient Information. (*a*) *He gives to all Life and Breath and all Things: And in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* (*b*) *Thou even thou art Lord alone,* ſays Nehemiah, *thou haſt made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Hoſt, the Earth, and all Things that are therein, the Seas, and all that is therein, and thou preſerveſt them all.* (*c*) *Lord thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt,* ſays the Pſalmiſt. And in another Place, (*d*) *He covereth the Heavens with Clouds, he prepareth Rain for the Earth, he maketh Graſs to grow upon the Mountains; he giveth to the Beaſt his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry.* Ye have heard how he feedeth *the Fowls of the Air,* and clothes *the Lilies of the Field*; and how at the ſame Time it is argued that *ye are much better than they,* and that he will much more clothe you. In ſhort, we are taught

(*a*) Act. xvii. xxv. v. 28. (*b*) Neh. ix. 6. (*c*) Pſ. xxxvi 6. (*d*) Pſ. cxlvii. 8.

that

that (a) *The Eyes of all wait on him, and he gives them their Meat in due ſeaſon: That he opens his Hand, and ſatisfies the Deſire of every living Thing.* And that they are all employed in his Service, appears from the many Inſtances in Holy Scripture, and other Hiſtories of his employing them for Mercy and Judgment in his Government of the World.

God then having ſuch an immediate Inſpection, and we being immediately under his Care, why can't we reſt ſecure, that *he being our Shepherd, we ſhall not want*; we employing ourſelves in his Service, he will ſupply us with Neceſſaries, let us then be eaſy, no longer *faithleſs, but believing, no longer leaning to our own Underſtanding, but truſting in the Lord with all our Heart*; no longer bowed down with worldly Cares and Fears, but *caſting all our Care upon him, for he careth for us.* It is not the Deſign of my Text, as I told you, to perſwade you of the Needleſneſs of your own Labour about Clothing, as if ye were to give up yourſelves to Idleneſs, and expect that God will clothe you by Nature, as he does the Herbs and Flowers; but the Force of the Argument runs thus, that God in his Providence orders it ſo, that all his Creatures are provided in all Neceſſaries, they doing only what by Nature he has

(a) Pſ. cxlv. 15.

fitted

fitted them for, though that is far ſhort of compaſſing the end alone, without the immediate Aſſiſtance of his Providence. And that therefore Man has leſs Reaſon to be diſtruſtful of Providence than other Creatures, becauſe God has enabled him to do much more towards his own Subſiſtence than moſt other Creatures can do; and therefore he need the leſs fear his want of that Subſiſtence. But it is this exceſſive Care, and Fear, and Diſtruſt of Providence, and not Men and Womens honeſt Labour, which by ſo many Arguments our Saviour diſſwades from. It is not theſe inferiour Things, which he would have us ſo eagerly ſeek after; but he would have us go about our Buſineſs cheerfully, and let the main Care of our Hearts run upon better Things than thoſe of this World. He has better Service for us than to employ us in looking after the Baggage. We have the main Battel to mind; we have the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh to encounter; we have the Kindgom of Heaven to purchaſe, and muſt be ſure that our chief Care be not diverted upon inferiour Things. Let our Hearts be ſet on Heaven, and on finding out the way that leads thither; and for the Things of this World a moderate Care of our own, and a great Truſt in God will ſerve turn. This is the way to take off our Care from the World, which we muſt ſhortly leave behind us; and to ſet it on Heaven, where we hope for a durable and truly comfortable Subſiſtence, that is worthy

that

that we ſhould exert our utmoſt Care and Endeavour in the Attainment of; and will richly recompence all our Labour.

Which God of his infinite Mercy in due Time beſtow upon us all for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake.

To him with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe.

SER-

SERMON XXI.

MAT. VI. 31.

Therefore take no Thought saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

V. 32. **(For after all these Things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.**

The Ninth Sermon on this Text.

I Doubt not ye all observe, how much our blessed Lord insists on this Subject against Covetousness and the inordinate Cares of the World; heaping Precept upon Precept, and Argu-

ment upon Argument, endeavouring by all proper Ways and Means, that could be thought of, to raiſe our Hearts above the World, and to ſet them on Heaven, and the Study of the Way that leads thither. Doubtleſs he had many excellent Reaſons for dwelling ſo long on this Subject. For as Covetouſneſs was a Vice which the *Phariſees*, one of the ſtricteſt Sects among the *Jews*, were particularly addicted to; and is indeed the Vice which borders moſt upon ſeveral Virtues, ſuch as Sobriety, Temperance, Moderation in Apparel and Furniture, Frugality and Diligence in our ſeveral Callings; and is likewiſe the freeſt from Scandal, where it doth not run to great exceſs; for ſome of the worſt of its evil Conſequences are inward, in withdrawing the Heart from God, and fixing it on the World, and being inward are not eaſy to be diſcerned but by the Searcher of Hearts; ſo upon all theſe Accounts it is a Vice much more lurking and dangerous. To which if we add the Conſideration of the moſt pernicious Conſequences of it, in eating out all Care of Religion; it is no wonder our Saviour took ſo much Pains to perſwade his Diſciples and Followers to be of another Spirit and Temper. When I ſay his Diſciples and Followers, I do not mean only the twelve choſen Diſciples, but the whole Company of his Diſciples, that is, all Chriſtians in general; for it is to be obſerved, that of thoſe many Arguments he makes uſe of to overthrow this Vice, not one

of

of them is taken from the Conſideration of the Apoſtolical or paſtoral Office, but from ſuch Things as are equally binding upon all Chriſtians, and accordingly the Apoſtles give the ſame Precept againſt Anxiety to all Chriſtians in ſeveral Parts of their Epiſtles.

In the Words, which I have read, we have theſe two Things.

I. A Repetition of the ſame Precept againſt Anxiety, drawn by Way of Concluſion from the former Argument. *Therefore, take no Thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?*

II. A new Enforcement of the ſame by two more Reaſons; namely, that this Practice was more ſuitable to the Principles of the Heathen, who believed nothing of a Providence. *After all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek.* And that *their heavenly Father knew that they had need of all theſe Things*; and therefore would take Care to provide them, with their own moderate, without their anxious Care. *For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.* I ſhall ſay ſomething firſt to the Repetition of the Precept, then to the new Arguments.

I. As to the Precept I ſhall conſider it under two Notions; firſt, as a Precept repeated; ſecondly,

ly, as a Concluſion drawn from the former Arguments; for under both theſe Views I think it is here repreſented.

1. Let us conſider it as a Precept repeated, as indeed it is plain that it is repeated, for at the 25th Verſe we had the ſame. *Therefore I ſay unto you take no thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, nor yet for your Body what ye ſhall put on.* And now again at the 31ſt. Verſe: *Therefore take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?* There are ſeveral Reaſons may be offered to account for this Repetition. 1. This ſhews us the Importance of the Precept, that our Lord comes over it again and again; as *Pharoah's* Dream was doubled to ſhew the Certainty and Importance thereof. 2. This is well ſuited to our Dulneſs of Underſtanding, and Shortneſs of Memory, and Deadneſs of Affections to have good Things frequently inculcated; and doth likewiſe put us in mind of our Duty, which is frequently to think and meditate upon them. 3. Eſpecially, in ſuch a long Diſcourſe as this, in which many Arguments are brought, and ſome of theſe ſeemingly by way of Precept, as here, *Behold the Fowls of the Air, and conſider the Lilies of the Field*, it is neceſſary to keep our Thoughts fixed on the main Scope and Deſign, which all theſe Arguments are brought to prove. It is true there are other collateral Truths we may learn from theſe Arguments;

as

as Mathematicians draw Corollaries, beſides the main Thing which was to be proved; as here in theſe Arguments we are informed of a particular Providence, which takes Care of all, the very minuteſt of the Creatures; yet ſtill the chief Concluſion for which Arguments are brought, is eſpecially to be minded if it were but to diſtinguiſh it from theſe Arguments, and in a long Diſcourſe for that very Reaſon to be now and then repeated.

2. We are to conſider theſe Words, *Therefore, take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?* As a Concluſion drawn from the former Arguments, and this the Word *Therefore* intimates unto us. I intend not now to look back to theſe Arguments, and to obſerve to you the Concluſiveneſs of them; that has been ſufficiently done already, when we were upon the Conſideration of the particular Arguments. I ſhall only briefly obſerve two Things from the Text taken under this View. 1. That we are hereby encouraged not only to conſider divine Truths in themſelves, but likewiſe to draw Inferences and Concluſions from them, and to act upon thoſe Inferences. 2. That this muſt be a Precept of extraordinary Conſequence, which our Saviour has not only again and again inculcated and repeated, but has likewiſe thought fit to confirm and back with ſo many Arguments; and ſurely we ſhall be ſo much the more inexcuſable,

if after all this Pains, we ſhall either forget, or negligently perform this important Duty, of extricating ourſelves from the anxious Cares and Solicitude about the World. So much for the Repetition of the Precept, or the Concluſion drawn from the former Arguments, which was the firſt Thing I obſerved from the Words.

II. I come now in the next Place to the two new Arguments, for preſſing the ſame Concluſion.

1. The firſt of them is in theſe Words; *for after all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek.* q. d. It is utterly inconſiſtent with the Knowledge of God and the Belief of his Providence, and the Duties of Religion, and the Hopes of a future State of Happineſs to the good, and Miſery to the wicked, to have your Hearts ſo much ſet on the World; it is more like ignorant *Heathens* than either *Jews* or *Chriſtians*, to give up yourſelves to theſe Practices. In ſpeaking to this Argument I ſhall do theſe two Things.

(1.) Shew how ſuitable this was to the Principles of the Heathen, to take a great deal of Pains for this World.

(2.) How diſagreeable it is to the Principles of Chriſtianity.

(1.) How ſuitable it is to the Principles of the Heathen, to beſtow their Pains chiefly on this World. For 1. The Ignorance they were in, or the very ſlender Notions they had of a future State,

State, was the Cauſe that their Thoughts and Cares were limited chiefly to this Life. It is true, ſome few of their learned Men had ſtrong Conjectures of a future State; but as they were but Conjectures, they made but ſlender Impreſſions upon their Spirits, and furniſhed rather Matter for Diſpute, than had any great Influence upon their Lives. 2. And if they knew little of a Life to come, they knew as little of Providence, more eſpecially of a particular Providence, which inſpects into all the Creatures, and provides for all their Wants. 3. They were likewiſe Strangers to thoſe many Precepts of Charity, with which the Chriſtian Religion abounds; and to the Doctrine that we are, like Stewards, to give an account of our Eſtates, as well as of our other Talents, to our great Maſter, who entruſted them with us. 4. Their Religion too, ſuch as it was, rather encouraged them eagerly to purſue Riches; and to aſſiſt them in it, one of their Gods *Pluto*, who was called the God of Riches, was aſſigned them to worſhip; ſo that they had very great Temptations and Encouragements to Covetouſneſs and Worldly-mindedneſs, beyond what we Chriſtians have. And this leads me to the ſecond Thing I propoſed to conſider on this Head; namely,

(2.) How diſagreeable theſe inordinate Cares are to the Principles of Chriſtianity. For 1. If we may gather the Principles of Chriſtianity, either from the Example or Precepts of the great

Maſter and Inſtitutor of it, it is plain to every one that has read the Hiſtory of the Goſpel; firſt, as to his Example, that he choſe a Life of Poverty, much greater Poverty than he thought fit to enjoin his Diſciples. It is plain that he avoided all ſuch Employments as might entangle him in worldly Cares; he was accuſed indeed, by his Enemies, as if he had ſet up for the Kingdom of *Judæa*; but it was a very groundleſs Calumny; for, as he told *Pilate*, his Kingdom was not of this World, ſo his Practice was ſuitable to that Profeſſion; for when the People would have taken him by force, and made him a King, he prudently withdrew himſelf from them, and his whole Practice was exceeding peaceable and inoffenſive. He had great Followings indeed of Multitudes, and this ſhewed what Intereſt he had to have ſet up againſt the *Roman* Government, (not then well ſettled) if he had been ſo minded. But he never making uſe of thoſe Multitudes to any Ends either of Inſurrection or Covetouſneſs, not ſo much as to give the leaſt Diſturbance to the Government, ſhews how far he was from any worldly Practices, or Deſigns upon them. Then as to his Doctrine, never was any Doctrine contrived better fitted to wean Mens Hearts from the World, than this was. There is ſcarce any other Vice ſo much confuted by an elaborate Argument, as Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Cares of the World. Here are beſides a great many other Branches of the Chriſtian Doctrine

trine utterly inconſiſtent therewith. For 2. What is the meaning of that moſt intenſe Love to God, that we muſt (a) *Love him with all our Heart, and Soul, and Mind, and Strength?* Will not that take us off from the Love of the World, at leaſt in any immoderate Degree? For if the Current of the Affections is conveyed into another Channel, this muſt needs moderate them as to the World. And 3. Has not the Diſcovery of the true Nature of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, that it is *an heavenly, not an earthly Kingdom*, the very ſame Effect? Let them who know nothing, or believe nothing of Heaven, employ their Endeavours chiefly about this World; but for Chriſtians, whoſe Affections are directed to be ſet on the Things above, it is no way conſiſtent with ſuch a Faith and Hope as theirs is, to be immerſed in worldly Cares. And 4. This worldly Spirit is utterly inconſiſtent with thoſe many Precepts of Charity, which are every where to be met with in the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apoſtles; for as I had Occaſion to ſhew you not long ago, tho the preciſe Quantity to which our worldly Eſtates are to be limited, is not determined, nor indeed can well be, conſidering Mens various Stations, Circumſtances, and Occaſions; yet there are ſo many good Rules preſcribed on that Subject, that if they were duly

(a) Mar. xii. 30.

obſerved

obſerved, they would keep both our worldly Eſtate and Cares within due Bounds; I mean the Bounds of Juſtice, and Contentment, and Charity, and Generoſity, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, which would ſo cramp this worldly Spirit, that the Cares of the World ſhould be ſo rooted out, as not to obſtruct our Care for a better Life. 5. Laſtly, the Belief of a Providence, which, we doing our Duty, will provide for all our neceſſary Occaſions, cuts off the only Pretext which we had left for Anxiety and Solicitude, namely, the providing of Victuals and Clothes for the future. But I chuſe rather to refer this to the next Argument, which our Saviour here brings in, namely,

2. *That our heavenly Father knows that we have need of all theſe Things.* This Argument is propoſed very ſhort; there is no doubt God knows all Things; but how doth it follow from thence, that we need not be anxious or over-careful ourſelves? Again, if God knows that we have need of all theſe Things, perhaps he knows too, that conſidering what a ſcrambling World this is, there is no compaſſing what we have need of, without a great deal of Care and Pains. And perhaps to ſome, God's knowing that we have need of theſe Things, might look like a Motive to ſtir us up to ſeek after them with ſo much greater Diligence, ſo far from being an Argument to the contrary, the leſſening of our Care about them. For clearing the Matter then, we muſt conſider more particularly

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what is the Importance of this Expreſſion, that *our heavenly Father knows that we have need of all theſe Things.* The Meaning of it in ſhort is, to acquaint us that this immoderate Care of ours is altogether needleſs and ſuperfluous; for that God who made us, knows that he made us ſubject to all theſe Neceſſities; and forbidding us to trouble ourſelves with any anxious Cares about them, he will certainly find ſome other way to ſupply them without our Anxiety. I can't perceive any the leaſt Flaw in this way of Reaſoning. To illuſtrate it by a familiar Compariſon: When a rich and kind Father ſends his Son abroad, and gives him order to mind his Studies, but for all Money that he ſhall want, to depend upon him, and to draw upon him; would not this Father have Reaſon to take it very ill at this Son's Hand, if neglecting his Studies, for which he ſent him abroad, he ſhould go and hire himſelf out to any Day Labour in that Country, and therewithal find himſelf Victuals and Clothes, and never more take any notice of his Father? Eſpecially as to the mere Neceſſaries of Life, he could not believe that ſuch a kind Father would begrutch them, as knowing that he has need of all theſe Things.

Now that this Argument may have its due Weight, there are theſe three Things in it, which require our ſerious Conſideration.

(1.) The Relation we ſtand in to God: *He is our heavenly Father.*

(2.) The

(2.) The Things which we ſtand in need of, namely, the Neceſſaries of Life; *What we ſhall eat, and what we ſhall drink, and wherewithal we ſhall be clothed.*

(3.) The Duty which upon both thoſe Accounts is incumbent upon us; namely, as Children to a Father, and as encouraged to look to him for the Supply of our Neceſſities.

(1.) The Relation we ſtand in to God; he is our heavenly Father: *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.* Now the Conſideration of this Relation, has a mighty Tendency to the Point in hand, which is to encourage our Hope and Truſt in God. There are three Things which encourage a Son's chearful Dependance on his Father. 1. If he knows the Father to be able to relieve all his Wants. 2. If he knows that his Father truly loves him. 3. If he knows that his Father is privy to his neceſſitous Circumſtances. Now tho one or other, or ſometimes all theſe, are wanting in an earthly Father; for often he is not able to ſupply his Son's Wants, being but in poor Circumſtances himſelf; and often he is alienated from his Son, that he has not the true Bowels of a Father towards him; and often, when the Son is at a diſtance from his Father, the Father may not know what hard Circumſtances his Child is in. Tho, I ſay, theſe are common Defects in earthly Fathers, there is never any of theſe incident to God: He not only knows our original Frame, and

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that this was the Infirmity of our Nature, that we were born ſubject to all theſe Neceſſities; but he knows likewiſe all the Changes, which from time to time are made in our ſeveral Circumſtances, and is always both willing and able to help us.

(2.) We are to conſider the Things which we are here ſaid to ſtand in need of, for they likewiſe will help to furniſh out the Argument againſt Diſtruſt and Anxiety. Theſe Things, as appears by the Context, are the Neceſſaries of Life, *What we ſhall eat, and what we ſhall drink, and wherewithal we ſhall be clothed.* Now, tho many a Father will begrutch the ſupplying a Son with Money, or Credit, to ſupport him in his Extravagances, yet there is ſcarce any Father ſo hard hearted, but will, if he is able, help his Son out, when he wants only neceſſary Subſiſtence, as the Caſe is here put.

By the by, there is a great and very uſeful Diſtinction to be here made of our ſeveral Wants; ſome of theſe are of the Neceſſaries of Life; Wants not of our own creating, but Wants to which, for wiſe Ends and Purpoſes, God has thought fit to ſubject our Natures; and there are other Wants, which, by our own Sin and Folly, we bring upon ourſelves. Now the firſt of theſe God has promiſed to ſupply without our Anxiety, and therefore we have all the Reaſon in the World to be eaſy about them; we may with as great Confidence and Aſſurance addreſs ourſelves to God for all thoſe Supplies,

Supplies, as an hungry Child may expect to be relieved by a tender Father or Mother, or a naked Child to be clothed by them: for theſe are the Act of God, and he takes Care that none of his Creatures ſuffer, for any of the natural Wants or Infirmities to which he has ſubjected them. But I find no ſuch Promiſe to the other ſort of Wants, which are the Effect of our own Sin and Folly; nor does the Reaſon of the Caſe afford us any ſuch Comfort in that Sort of Diſtreſſes, for that would be to encourage Sin and Folly. While we do our Duty, and keep in God's Service, and do not forſake him, we ſhall be duly provided for; but if we turn Deſerters, we have then no more Right to the Victuals, and Clothes, and Medicines, which are provided for God's Soldiers, as it were; but run the Hazard of a thouſand Hardſhips, which attend our rebellious Courſes, and there is not the leaſt Promiſe or Encouragement, I know of, that they ſhall be ſupplied, till we return to God and our Duty. And this leads me to the third and laſt Thing I propoſed to conſider; namely,

(3.) The Duty which upon the above mentioned Accounts is incumbent upon us, as Children to a Father, and as we are encouraged to look to God for the Supply of all our Wants and Neceſſities.

As to the firſt, the Duty which we owe as Children to a Father; to mention no more of it than belongs to this Subject of Anxiety, we muſt take care.

care. 1. Not to diſtruſt our Father's Care of us, we doing of our Duty, there is no better Cure of Anxiety than firmly to believe that we are under God's paternal Care. Let us in this Reſpect endeavour as much to free our Minds of all Cares and Fears and Solicitude about the World, as an Embaſſadour ſent abroad in the Service of a generous Prince, or rather to keep to the Simile in the Text, as a Son ſent abroad to travel by his kind Father's Order, and upon his Charge. If ſuch a Son knows that there is no Fear but that his Father has Eſtate enough, and that he keeps within the compaſs of his Inſtructions as to his Expences, ſurely he will be in no manner of Pain as to the anſwering of his Bills; and under no ſort of Concern how he ſhall ſubſiſt in that foreign Countrey, during the remaining time of his Travels; no further than to take care that he do nothing to alienate his Father's Affection from him. So let us only take Care to do our Duty, according to the Inſtructions of our heavenly Father; and never in the leaſt doubt but that we ſhall be provided for in our Travels. But 2. To keep the ſame Similitude, another Part of our Duty is to addreſs our heavenly Father in all our Wants; for as in the aforementioned Caſe, though a Father may know very well what Supplies are proper to be ſent to his Son, without aſking; yet he juſtly expects that the Son ſhould from Time to Time let him know his Wants, and

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deſire the proper Supplies of him, when he wants them, and likewiſe return him Thanks after he has them. This exactly ſuits our Duty in this Reſpect to our heavenly Father, as it is deſcribed by the Apoſtle, *Ph.* iv. 6. *Be careful for nothing: But in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known unto God.*

Then as we are encouraged to look unto God for the Supply of all our Wants and Neceſſities; this ſhould teach us to take no unworthy, ſordid or diſhoneſt Courſe to ſupply our Wants, but cheerfully to depend on God for that Supply; and likewiſe to behave ourſelves ſo, that we throw not ourſelves out of God's Protection, and from under the Care of his Providence. Ye have heard of ſome Fathers diſowning and diſinheriting their undutiful Children. Let us take heed that this be not our Caſe, that we provoke not God to abandon us, both as to his Care of us in this World, and as to his providing an eternal Inheritance for us in the World to come. Or, if we have ſo provoked him already, let us be at no reſt till we reſolve to return with the penitent Prodigal, and ſubmit ourſelves, and make our Peace with our heavenly Father: Telling him that we are no more worthy to be called his Sons, and humbly begging that he would admit us in the loweſt Station of his meaneſt Servants. And for your Comfort I have Authority to promiſe you,

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if ye come with true penitent Hearts, heartily ſorry for what is paſt, and ſincerely reſolved to forſake your evil Courſes, and to obey God for the future, he will for his dear Son Jeſus Chriſt's Sake, both pardon your former Tranſgreſſions, and aſſiſt you with his Grace to make you new Men and Women hereafter, fruitful in every good Work, to his Glory, and your own Sanctification and Salvation.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant for the ſame Jeſus Chriſt's Sake. *To whom, &c.*

SERMON XXII.

MAT. VI. 33.

But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.

The Tenth Sermon on this Text.

OUR bleſſed Saviour having in the preceding Diſcourſe from the 25th Verſe, given us diverſe Characters of Anxiety, with ſeveral good Reaſons againſt it, comes now in this, and the next Verſe, to direct us to the contrary Virtue, which conſiſts in two Things; *firſt*, in bending

ing our principal Care to ſeek after Heaven, and Holineſs as the Way that leads to it; *then*, in moderating our Cares about the World, that they do not extend to any long Time to come, but that we refer the worldly Cares of the future Time to the Future itſelf. It is the firſt of theſe we are now upon: *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.* In the Words we have theſe two Things.

I. A Precept by way of Antitheſis, or Oppoſition to Anxiety: *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs.*

II. A Promiſe, that in ſo doing all worldly Neceſſaries ſhall be added: *And all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.*

I. I begin with the Antitheſis, or oppoſite Duty to Anxiety: *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs.* The Oppoſition appears by the firſt Word *But*; which I intend to conſider in the firſt Place, for caſting further Light upon the Sin of Anxiety, before I come to the Deſcription of the oppoſite Duty. It appears then from theſe Words, that one main Character of the Sin of Anxiety is this, that in the chief and principal Place it ſeeks after the World, preferably to Heaven as our chief End, and to Holineſs as the Way that leads thither. But becauſe the Deceitfulneſs of

Mens Hearts is apt to miſlead them in the Application of this Rule, and they will be ready to feed themſelves with the Fancy, that above all Things they ſeek after Heaven, tho they are ever ſo deeply immerſed in the World; I ſhall therefore aſſiſt you by a few other Rules, by which ye may try which of theſe two Ends, Heaven, I mean, or this World, ye do chiefly purſue and ſeek after.

1. Let us examine which of the two is moſt in our Thoughts, the gaining of the World, or the gaining of Heaven. (*a*) *If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *let my right Hand forget her Cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth; if I prefer not Jeruſalem above my chief Joy.* What he ſaid of *the earthly*, the true Chriſtian may ſay of *the heavenly Jeruſalem.* It is on all Occaſions very much in his Thoughts; he orders, at leaſt ſincerely endeavours to order his whole Life and Converſation ſo, as that he may get to Heaven at laſt; that is the Mark he aims at; and when at any time, either through Ignorance or Inadvertency, or the Temptations of bad Company, or his own natural or acquired Corruption, he wanders out of the Way or loyters in it, and makes not the due Progreſs that he ought to do in the Way to Heaven, he heartily repents, and begs God's Grace, and uſes

(*a*) Pſa. cxxxvii. 5.

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his own moſt vigorous Endeavours to recover himſelf quickly into the Way of his Duty, which is the Way that leads to Heaven. Heaven is the Object of all his Hopes; the miſſing of it is the chief Object of his Fears; the contriving to keep in the right way to it, is the chief of his Care and Study. But how then, doth not a good Man mind the World at all, does not he exerciſe himſelf diligently in ſome worldly Calling, as well as other Men, and endeavour to thrive in it as well as they? Yes he does, but with quite other Views and in a quite other Manner than thoſe Men do, who ſet their Heart on the World. They love the World ſo well, that they labour for it, as if they were never to leave it; he provides it only as a thing neceſſary for his Journey, and would be glad at all times to exchange it for Heaven. They give up themſelves to immoderate and exceſſive Cares about the World; he breaks off all theſe Suckers of impertinent Cares, and minds the one Thing neceſſary in the chief Place, and other Things with a much more moderate and inferior Degree of Care and Concern. Their Heads and Hearts are full of their worldly Projects; his great, and only great Care indeed, is to fit himſelf for Heaven; and the World he minds as a Work by the by. In ſhort, if we had a Window, that we could look into Mens Hearts, we ſhould ſee that the main Affection of the worldly Man, that principal Wheel which ſets all the reſt agoing, turns to the

World; but that in a good Chriſtian it turns to God. The chief, and main, and moſt predominant of his Deſires and Aims is upon Heaven, where he may more fully and freely enjoy God to all Eternity.

2. Let us examine whether we uſe the moſt effectual Means to get to Heaven; for by this we may know whether our Hearts are chiefly ſet upon it. For it is not an ill formed Deſign which will carry us thither, or is any certain Sign that it is chief in our Thoughts. If any of the *Iſraelites*, for Example, who were Captives in *Babylon*, had pretended ever ſo earneſt Deſires of returning to their own Country, but when a good Opportunity preſented of returning thither, as there did by the favourable Edict of *Cyrus*; if, I ſay, at that Time any of them would not prepare himſelf to go, but ſtayed ſtill in *Babylon*, would any one believe that ſuch Perſons were in good earneſt, when they pretended ſuch a Love to their Country? So we may feed ourſelves, and others, with the Fancy that our Hearts are principally ſet on Heaven, but if we do not ſet ourſelves in good earneſt to make uſe of the Means, we do but deceive ourſelves, when we think we have ſuch a noble End principally in our Thoughts. And more particularly, can any Man in good earneſt believe that he is chiefly ſeeking after Heaven, when he neglects all the Means that lead thither; ſuch as the diligent Study of the holy Scriptures, the Exerciſe of Prayer,

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the frequenting of the holy Sacrament, Juſtice and Honeſty in his Dealings, the ſhewing Mercy to the Poor and Needy, a thorough Repentance for his Sins, and a diligent Endeavour to amend them? If any Man is ſo taken up with his worldly Projects and Buſineſs, as to neglect theſe Things; if he prefers his Farms and his Merchandiſe, to the great Concerns of his Soul, he may aſſure himſelf that the Love of the World is uppermoſt in his Heart.

3. Of great Affinity with this, is another Mark and Sign, whereby we may ſafely try ourſelves whether our Hearts are chiefly ſet on Heaven or no; namely, if we are very much afraid of, and carefully avoid every thing which we are ſenſible is obſtructive of that Deſign. The immoderate Cares of the World we muſt needs be ſenſible (as Suckers draw away the Subſtance from a Plant) withdraw our Care from Heaven, and from thoſe Duties which lead thither. All Sin and Vice is a very great Hindrance of our Growth in Grace, and eſpecially when ſinful Actions, by frequent Repetition, grow up into ſinful Habits, they are then like a great Clog tied to a Man's Foot, which effectually hinder his Progreſs in the Way to Heaven. And therefore, pretend what they will, whoever they are that indulge themſelves in evil Habits, certainly they have not their Hearts chiefly ſet on Heaven.

4. Another Way to try whether our Hearts are chiefly ſet on Heaven or the World, is to obſerve which of them, upon a Competition, we rather chuſe. It is to be feared, if our Saviour ſhould ſay to us as he did to the rich young Man in the Goſpel, (*a*) *One Thing thou lackeſt, go thy Way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the Poor, and thou ſhalt have Treaſure in Heaven; and come take up the Croſs, and follow me*; that many would do as that young Man did; that is, they would not come up to thoſe Terms, and would ſooner leave Chriſt than the World. The primitive Chriſtians had many ſuch Opportunities of giving Proof whether they would be Confeſſors or Deſerters. This Duty of bearing the Croſs, which was the great Sign whereby they proved the Truth of their Chriſtianity in thoſe Days, we are now great Strangers to, and for ought that can be conjectured from the Behaviour of many that call themſelves Chriſtians, they would ſooner abandon the Truth, and change to every thing that is uppermoſt, before they would loſe a Place or Preferment, far leſs all that they have in this World. It is dreadful to obſerve how, in Times of Trial, whole Countries, (a very few excepted) for fear of Perſecution, have renounced their Religion, and followed that of the Prince, or any proſperous Uſurper, when their

(*a*) Mar. x. 31.

worldly

worldly Intereſt directed to that, as the moſt proſperous Method for this World.

5. And laſtly, We may know which our Hearts are moſt ſet upon, God or the World, by obſerving which we prefer, and which we poſtpone. If we ſpend the Prime of our Life, and Strength, and Health, in the Service of the World, and think to put God off with Sickneſs or Old-Age, or a Death bed Repentance; it is plain then that the World has the principal Place in our Hearts, and that we think to ſacrifice to God with the Blind and the Lame, and to ſerve him with that Time which is unfit for minding our worldly Affairs. This I think is a plain Demonſtration, which of the two has the chief Place in our Heart and Affection. So much for the firſt Thing I obſerved in the Words, namely, the Light they caſt on the Sin of Anxiety, from this Part of the Antitheſis in my Text.

I proceed next to a more particular Conſideration of the Duty here enjoined, which is *to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs.* Where, firſt, I ſhall explain what is to be meant by theſe two great Objects of our Care, *The Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*; and then what by ſeeking them *firſt*, or in the chief and principal Place.

By the Kingdom of God, in the New Teſtament, is often meant that Method of Salvation laid down by Chriſt in the Goſpel; and it is likewiſe called the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom

dom of Chriſt, or the Meſſiah; and in this Senſe it is reſtrained ſometimes to true Believers, and ſometimes extended to all who have given up their Name to Chriſt, tho there be Tares mixed with the good Corn, Hypocrites and wicked Men mixed in with true Believers; and in this Senſe it reſpects chiefly the Kingdom of Grace; but in many other Paſſages of the New Teſtament, this Phraſe, *The Kingdom of God*, ſignifies the heavenly Felicity itſelf. Now in this Place, *The Righteouſneſs of God*, being added to it, the Kingdom of God I take to be the heavenly Reward itſelf, and the Righteouſneſs of God, thoſe Duties which God has preſcribed as the Way and Means for attaining it. Or if theſe are to be taken both for one and the ſame thing, they make up the Kingdom of God in that larger Senſe, as it comprehends both the Kingdom of Grace and Glory. Whichſoever Way we take it, it comes all to one and the ſame thing; it comprehends the Kingdom of Glory as the End, and the Kingdom of Grace as the Means, and both theſe are to be ſought in the firſt or principal Place. To go on then in the Method of my Text: Let us firſt conſider the ultimate End we are to aim at, the heavenly Reward, and then the Way and Means of attaining it, called here God's Righteouſneſs, or that Righteouſneſs which God requires and will accept, in order to our everlaſting Salvation.

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To begin with the eternal Reward itſelf. It is ſet forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, by all thoſe Things which may give us the higheſt Idea of it, for Wealth, Pleaſure, and Honour, ſeparated from thoſe ſinful Appendages of them, with which they are uſually attended in this World. Not to divert your Thoughts with any other Apprehenſions of it at this Time, let us conſider a little this of a Kingdom, and a Kingdom of God; where, not to ſpeak of the Glories and Splendor of the heavenly Court, I ſhall only deſire you to conſider the heavenly Felicity under the Notion of the moſt perfect Government. And in it, 1. The Happineſs of being immediately under the beſt of Rulers, God Almighty himſelf. 2. The happy Conſtitution of that Government, which is a cloſe Conjunction of their Duty, their Inclination, and their Pleaſure or Happineſs. 3. The Obedience and Felicity of the Subjects. 4. The Tranquility and Security of this Kingdom. I am eaſily induced to ſay ſomething, tho but ſhort, of all theſe; ſomething, becauſe the Explication of my Text, and the Agreeableneſs of the Subject requires it, and but little, for *who is ſufficient for theſe Things?*

(1.) Let us conſider that it is a Kingdom of God, and that the Subjects of it will have the Happineſs of being immediately governed by the beſt of Rulers. It is hard for us to conceive how great an Ingredient this is in the Happineſs of any Kingdom. Had we an Idea of the perfecteſt Ruler that

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ever was in the World, it might help us to a Conception of this Part of the heavenly Felicity. A Ruler perfectly well skilled in all the beſt Arts of Government, and as perfectly well informed in all the Circumſtances of his Subjects; a Ruler that entirely loves his People, and has no Intereſt to drive on, ſeparate from theirs; a Ruler entirely beloved by his People, and a People thoroughly ſenſible of their own Happineſs; a Ruler againſt whom there is no riſing up, but who has all Power in his Hand to keep under all his Enemies. Can any one tell what a great Bleſſing ſuch a Ruler would be in the imperfect Governments of this World? Governments blended with a thouſand miſerable Circumſtances, which the beſt Ruler could never remove. What muſt it be then where the Ruler has an Almighty Power to do as much Good as he pleaſes, and an infinite Goodneſs to do as much Good as his Subjects are capable of? It is not to be conceived, what an infinite Happineſs would proceed from this one Conſideration of ſuch a King.

(2.) Let us conſider the happy Conſtitution and Model of that Government, which conſiſts in a Conjunction of theſe three, the Subjects Duty, and Happineſs and Inclination. I know not whether I ſpeak properly, when I mention the Duty of the celeſtial Subjects; for in ſo far as their Buſineſs will be preſcribed them by God, it may be called Duty; but if we conſider the Readineſs,

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the Alacrity, the never-ſailing Compliance of all the Subjects of that heavenly Kingdom, we may more properly reckon them the Principles of that renewed Nature of theirs, which they are under not any the leaſt Temptation to reſiſt, than Duties which are commonly enjoined by Laws and Penalties. But whatever they are, it is certain they are not more their Duty than their Happineſs; and not more their Duty and Happineſs than their Inclination and Delight. So that there cannot be any Frame or Form of Government deviſed, that is, any Way comparable with this for the Felicity of it.

(3) Let us conſider the Obedience and the Felicity of the Subjects of this heavenly Kingdom; for if the Prince and the Government were ever ſo good, and the Subjects rebellious, this would mar the Muſick of the whole, and put even an heavenly Kingdom into Diſorder. But that divine Likeneſs into which they are framed, which removes far from them any Murmuring or Diſcontent, and keeps them at an infinite diſtance from any Thoughts of Diſobedience, not only diſpoſes them to an Harmony and Agreement, and a ready Compliance with every Thing required by this great King, or any of the Officers of his Kingdom, but makes them ſenſible of the extreme Happineſs and Felicity they enjoy under that bleſſed Conduct. From whence we may gather how much thoſe heavenly Inhabitants ſhall be ſpiritualized, and

and delivered from all earthly or carnal Inclinations, which gives them ſuch a Reliſh of that heavenly State: For if it were poſſible for a carnal Man to be tranſlated thither, without being changed in Heart and Mind, it is not to be imagined that he could be happy there; he would be out of his proper Element, it would be like a learned Mathematical Lecture to an ignorant Clown; he would be weary of it, and would turn Male content in Heaven, and loſe all the Satisfaction of the bleſſed Place and Government.

(4.) Let us conſider the Tranquility and Security of this heavenly Kingdom, moleſted with no Enemies within or without; a Kingdom ſo firmly eſtabliſhed that there is not ſo much as the leaſt fear that there can be any Diſturbance in it, or any overthrowing of it. The Apoſtle calls it *a Kingdom that cannot be moved*, Heb. xii. 28. what an unſpeakable Comfort is this, to be in Poſſeſſion of the greateſt Felicity, and to know at the ſame Time that there is no ſhaking of that bleſſed State, but that it ſhall continue ſo for ever and ever? This is the Kingdom we ought to have in our View, and not only in View, but to bend all our Endeavours towards the Attainment of it. This is the ultimate End to which all our other Ends muſt be ſubſervient. We muſt be ſure to entertain no Deſign that doth in the leaſt interfere with this, let this be *the firſt*, and all the reſt *ſecond to it*. Now in order to fit and prepare

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us for this heavenly Kingdom, we muſt take ſpecial Care to adorn ourſelves with ſuch virtuous Qualities and Diſpoſitions, as are required by God to give us an Entrance into that heavenly State, and likewiſe to qualify us for partaking of the Felicities of it. And this leads me to the ſecond Thing which is to be the Object of our Care and Study. Namely,

God's Righteouſneſs, *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs.* By Righteouſneſs, whenever it is put as the ſole Condition or Qualification for attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, is always meant univerſal Righteouſneſs, which takes in not only the particular Virtue of Juſtice, but the whole Duty of Man, as at the 20 Verſe of the 5*th* Chap. of this Goſpel. *Except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the* Scribes *and* Phariſees, *ye ſhall in no Caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This Righteouſneſs by the Evangelical Condeſcenſion is far ſhort of a ſinleſs Obedience; but is abſolved by our ſincere Endeavours, though in many Things we offend all of us. The Evangelical Righteouſneſs conſiſts in an hearty Endeavour to obey the Laws of the Goſpel; and in a diligent applying to God for Grace to do it, and a quick and ſincere Repentance after Lapſes; and all this founded on a true Faith in Chriſt, in and through whom it is that we are admitted to the Benefits of the new Covenant. This is called God's Righteouſneſs; for becauſe

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of the Mercy and Condeſcenſion of it, it differs from Man's Righteouſneſs in divers very conſiderable Points. For human Judgment requires ſuch an exact Obedience, that if a Man is ever ſo good a Man in other Reſpects, that will not be admitted in excuſe of any one Tranſgreſſion of a penal Law; but God looks chiefly after the Sincerity of the Heart, and if that be right with him, is ready to pardon many Failings. In human Judicatories too, if a Man be guilty of a Crime, tho he is ever ſo penitent for it, his Repentance will not ſave him before Man's Tribunal, though it will before God's. Since we cannot then attain to the Righteouſneſs of Innocence, let us endeavour after the Righteouſneſs of Repentance; and ſince we can't attain to the Righteouſneſs of a perfect, let us endeavour after the Righteouſneſs of a ſincere Obedience. And this is God's Righteouſneſs, without which, notwithſtanding all that Chriſt has done and ſuffer'd for us, we ſhall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. But I muſt not conceal from you another Notion I have likewiſe of God's Righteouſneſs in this Place; that perhaps it is ſet here in Oppoſition to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, which our Saviour is all this while improving; and then the Meaning will be, ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs which he approves of, *viz.* not that which conſiſts only in an external Obedience, like that which I have been deſcribing of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, which makes

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a fair ſhew in the Sight of Men, and will be accepted in Man's Judgment; but that true inward Sanctification, which is required, and will be accepted by God the Searcher of Hearts. So much for the Objects of our Care, Heaven, and Righteouſneſs or Holineſs which leads to it.

The laſt Thing we are to conſider in the Duty here required is the high Degree of Care, with which both theſe are to be ſought after, expreſſed in theſe Words *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.* By this Word *firſt*, we are taught to make theſe our chief and principal Care, as being the only Things almoſt worthy of our Thoughts and Labour. It is very obſervable how honourably the Scripture ſpeaks every where of the Study of Heaven, and of Holineſs as the Way thither; and how diminutively, in compariſon, of all worldly Affairs. *(a) Wiſdom is the principal Thing*, ſays Solomon; *therefore get Wiſdom: And with all thy getting get Underſtanding.* By Wiſdom in thoſe Books is meant Religion and the Fear of God. When *Martha* complained to our Saviour that her Siſter *Mary* left all the Care of the Houſhold Affairs upon her, while *Mary* made uſe of the Opportunity of Chriſt's Company to improve her Soul in its ſpiritual Concerns: Our Saviour in his Anſwer ſhewed how little he eſteemed all

(a) Prov. iv. 7.

the houſhold Affairs in compariſon of this. (a) Martha, Martha, ſays he, *thou art anxious, and troubled about many Things: But one Thing is neceſſary; and* Mary *hath choſen that good Part which ſhall not be taken from her.* It is certain, as much as Heaven is preferable to Earth; as much as the Soul is preferable to the Body; as much as Eternity is perferable to this ſhort Time which we live here; as much is Religion and the Fear of God preferable to all temporal Concerns whatſoever.

To conclude then (for I find I have not time now to ſpeak to the Promiſe annexed) let this be our chief and main Care and Study; let this be the Buſineſs of our Lives, all other Things are but By works; they are Matters indifferent, that is the *unum neceſſarium*, *the one thing needful*; and therefore let us mind it, not in a negligent, unconcerned Way, but with as great a Degree of Application as a covetous Man minds his Gain, or a voluptuous Man his Honour, or a malicious Man his Revenge; let this be our Study day and night, to acquire all the Parts of Holineſs in as high a Degree as we can, that being true Members of Chriſt's Kingdom of Grace here, we may be Members of his Kingdom of Glory hereafter. *Now to him with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, &c.*

(a) Luk. x. 41.

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SERMON XXIII.

MAT. VI. 33.

But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, **and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.**

The Eleventh Sermon on this Text.

IN a former Diſcourſe on theſe Words, there were two Things I obſerved to be contained in them.

I. A Precept, by way of Antitheſis, or Oppoſition to Anxiety. *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.*

II. A Promiſe, that in obſerving this Precept, we ſhall not only obtain the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, but likewiſe all worldly

Neceſſaries. *And all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.*

Now having ſpoke to the Precept oppoſite to Anxiety at the laſt Occaſion, the *ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*, I proceed now

II. To the Promiſe or Encouragement annexed. *And all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.* What is meant by all theſe Things is very plain from the Context, which runs thus, Verſe 31. *Therefore take no Thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed? (for after all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.* Then follows the Text, *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.* So that it is very plain, the *all theſe Things* here is the ſame which was mentioned in the preceding Verſe, namely, the Neceſſaries of Life, *What we ſhall eat and what we ſhall drink, and wherewithal we ſhall be cloathed.* But what is the Meaning of this *they ſhall be added unto you?* It is not ſaid, they ſhall be given to you, but *they ſhall be added*, implying, not that we ſhall have them as the principal Reward of that Study; but that they ſhall be thrown in to a greater Bargain, as an inconſiderable Overplus or Addition to it; ſo that there are two Things in this Promiſe.

1. One

Firſt, One ſuppoſed, that whoſoever principally ſets his Heart on Heaven, and ſincerely ſtudies Holineſs as the Way to it, he ſhall be ſure to gain that noble Prize. And

Secondly, The other expreſſed, that all Things neceſſary to Life ſhall be ſuperadded.

As it was in the Caſe of *Solomon* upon his firſt entring upon the Kingdom, 1 *Kings* iii. 5. where God gives it him in his choice to aſk what he would, and he ſhould have it, And then *Solomon* aſked an underſtanding Heart to judge and govern the People wiſely. God was ſo well pleaſed with his Choice, that he gave him both it, and Riches and Honour which he did not aſk. *And the Speech pleaſed the Lord that* Solomon *had asked this Thing. And God ſaid unto him, becauſe thou haſt asked this Thing, and haſt not asked for thyſelf long Life, neither haſt asked Riches for thyſelf, nor haſt asked the Life of thine Enemies, but haſt asked for thyſelf Underſtanding, to diſcern Judgment: Behold I have done according to thy Words; lo I have given thee a wiſe and an underſtanding Heart, ſo that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee ſhall there ariſe any like unto thee. And I have alſo given thee that thou haſt not asked, both Riches and Honour, ſo that there ſhall not be any of the Kings like unto thee all thy Days.* I have quoted you this Paſſage of *Solomon's* Hiſtory at large, becauſe God's dealing thus with *Solomon* caſts great Light upon this Promiſe in my Text. For

God is ſo well pleaſed with our Preference of the Kingdom of Heaven to this World, and with our minding the Study of Holineſs before the Study of the Ways to grow rich, that he promiſes here both to grant us theſe principal Things which we deſire, and to throw in a Competency of worldly Bleſſings to boot. But to return from this Digreſſion concerning *Solomon*, the firſt Thing included in this promiſe is a Grant of Holineſs here and Happineſs hereafter; *God's Righteouſneſs and his Kingdom.* This is the main Thing; the other is but an Addition and Bounty thrown in to the Bargain. In ſpeaking to this Part of the Promiſe.

(I.) I ſhall prove that Holineſs and Happineſs are promiſed, and ſhall infallibly be beſtowed upon them, who ſeriouſly and with their chief Induſtry ſeek after them.

(II.) I ſhall anſwer ſome Objections to the contrary.

(I.) I am to prove that Holineſs and Happineſs are promiſed to them, who ſeriouſly and with their chief Induſtry ſeek after them. To confirm this Doctrine I might tranſcribe all the Promiſes of the Goſpel, for they are all made upon Condition of our diligent aſking and hearty endeavouring after them; but I ſhall confine myſelf to the Text and Context. To what purpoſe doth our Saviour exhort his Diſciples ſo earneſtly to ſeek for Heaven and Holineſs, with their principal

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Care, if he did not mean that they were attainable by that Care? But perhaps, it may be ſaid that he exhorts to theſe Things, as Generals in an Army exhort their Soldiers to fight couragiouſly, in Hopes of Victory; not but that it often happens that a Soldier though he do his Duty ever ſo well, may miſs of the Victory. It is true it is often ſo in the Affairs of this World. (*a*) *The Race is not always to the ſwift, nor the Battle to the ſtrong, nor Bread to the wiſe, nor Riches to Men of underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of ſkill, but Time and Chance happeneth to them all.* But there is no ſuch Lottery in our ſpiritual Warfare. (*b*) *We ſo run, not as uncertainly; and we fight ſo, not as one that beateth the Air.* We go upon ſure Grounds; (*c*) *for he is faithful that hath promiſed.* It is true ſo far, may ſome think, if we are holy and righteous Perſons, we ſhall not miſs of Happineſs; but how are we ſure that this Holineſs and Righteouſneſs ſhall be attained by our Endeavours, though ever ſo diligent? It is ſo hard a Matter to conquer corrupt Nature and to overcome evil Habits, that perhaps with all our Endeavours we ſhall fall ſhort of that Degree of Holineſs, which is neceſſary to the Kingdom of Heaven. I anſwer that provided our Endeavours are ſincere, and ſo vigorous that we ſtudy Holi-

(*a*) Eccl, ix. 11. (*b*) 1 Cor. ix. 26. (*c*) Heb. x. 23.

neſs in the firſt and chief Place, it is certain both from the Nature of God, and the whole Current of the Holy Scripture, that our Labour ſhall not be in vain, but that *(a) we ſhall reap if we faint not.* God is always repreſented as an Encourager of the leaſt true Beginnings of Goodneſs. *(b) He will not break the bruiſed Reed, nor quench the ſmoking Flax.* To him who improves the Talent he will certainly encreaſe it, as it is in the Parable. *(c)* Let us deal honeſtly as to our Parts, and there is not the leaſt Doubt of God's Goodneſs and Fidelity as to his. And that the Promiſe in my Text was deſigned by our Saviour to be extended to the Kingdom of Heaven, appears by his making the good Things of this World but an *Auctarium, a little Overplus*, which uſed to be thrown in to make good Meaſure. And St. *Luke* in the parallel Place, *Luk.* xii. 32. is more expreſs in explaining it in this Senſe. For having ſaid, *But rather ſeek ye the Kingdom of God, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you,* he adds immediately *Fear not little Flock; for it is your Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom.* q. d. Fear not that this your Study and Induſtry will prove in vain; or that it will be God's Pleaſure to give the Kindgom of Heaven to others who do not take ſo much Pains for it, and exclude

(*a*) Gal. vi. 9. (*b*) Iſ. xlii. 3. (*c*) Mat. xxv. 29.

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you after all your Pains; for it is his good Pleaſure to give it to thoſe few in compariſon, who preſer it to all Things elſe, and diligently ſeek it.

II. The Objections againſt this Doctrine are chiefly three; which I ſhall briefly propoſe and anſwer.

Obj. 1. Some depend on their relation to ſome famous Church for Salvation, and ſo they are but reckoned true Members of it, think themſelves ſafe, even without making Heaven and Holineſs their principal Study. The *Jews* expected to ſhare in the Kingdom of Heaven, as being the Deſcendants of faithful *Abraham.* Some think Salvation is theirs, as being true Members of the Church of *Rome*; and ſome that it is theirs as being true Members of the Church of *England*; and others that it is theirs, as having addicted themſelves to ſome Party, that they think holier and ſtricter than the reſt. *Anſ.* Such Objectors do not underſtand the Principles of the ſeveral Churches and Parties; for tho ſome of them are ſo uncharitable as to condemn all other Churches but their own, yet none of them pretend that there is any Church in the World endowed with ſuch a Virtue, that without diligent ſeeking after Heaven, and ſtudying the Way of Holineſs that leads to it, their Members ſhall attain it, purely by Virtue of their joining themſelves to their Society. And if I knew any ſuch Church in the World, I would deſire

ſire no better Proof of her being a moſt falſe and erroneous Church; for as St. *Paul* tells us, (a) *In Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but a new Creature.* And there is no leſs than a natural Impoſſibility in the thing, that without Holineſs any one ſhould enjoy the Happineſs of Heaven; the Pleaſures there being no ſuch Pleaſures, as that an unholy Perſon can delight in them.

Obj. 2. Againſt this Doctrine, that Heaven will be beſtowed on them who diligently ſeek it in the Way of Holineſs, it may be objected, that Heaven is allotted in the ſecret Decrees of God, and therefore does not depend on our Diligence in ſeeking after it in the Way of Holineſs. But this dangerous Objection may be briefly anſwered thus, 1. Firſt, That we are forbid to look into God's ſecret Decrees; (b) *Secret Things belong unto God:* We are to govern ourſelves by his revealed, not by his ſecret Will. 2. I anſwer, that it is a great Miſtake to think there is any Difference between God's ſecret and revealed Will. The ſame Perſons who he has told us in his revealed Will ſhall obtain Heaven and Happineſs, the ſame very Perſons, and no other, has he decreed it for in his ſecret Will; ſo that there is no Relief to be had from this Doctrine by God's ſecret Decrees.

(a) Gal. vi. 15. (b) Deut. xxix. 29.

Obj. 3.

Obj. 3. Laſtly, Againſt this Doctrine, that Holineſs and Happineſs ſhall be beſtowed on them who ſeek after them moſt earneſtly, and in the principal Place, may be objected the common Opinion, that by a few Acts of Sorrow and Contrition on a Death-bed, one may get to Heaven, tho we have principally ſerved the World, and our Luſts, all our Life long; and therefore there can be no ſuch Neceſſity of making this our principal Study and Buſineſs, as this, and ſeveral other Texts do direct. But to this I anſwer, that for that very Reaſon, that Doctrine of an eaſy way of getting to Heaven by a few Acts of Sorrow and Contrition at laſt, tho we have not been ſerious in the Buſineſs of Religion all our Life long, we ought to ſuſpect as a dangerous Doctrine contrary to the Scriptures, and to common Senſe and Reaſon. It is true there are great Promiſes in Scripture to Repentance, but can any one think that a few Acts of Sorrow is true Repentance, if it doth not proceed to Amendment of Life? By all the Deſcriptions of Repentance I could ever gather from the Holy Scripture, if it does not bring forth the Fruits of a good Life, it is only Hypocriſy, or at beſt the lazy Wiſhes of the Sluggard, and will not be accepted by God. There is a great Difference between a Sluggard's wiſhing and wou!ding, and a diligent Man's getting up and doing; and there is great difference between a godly Sorrow, which produces a real Change of Heart and Life,

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and another Sorrow which evaporates all in a few good Words and Wiſhes; the one is a true, and the other a falſe Repentance. From all which it appears, that this is a certain true Doctrine, that Holineſs and Happineſs are promiſed, and ſhall certainly be beſtowed on them, and only them, who ſeriouſly, and with their chief and principal Induſtry, ſeek after them.

Secondy, I come next to the ſecond Thing more preſly contained in the Words; namely, that to the ſame Perſons all the Neceſſaries of Life ſhall be ſuper-added: *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things* (*viz.* the Neceſſaries of Meat, Drink, and Clothing) *ſhall be added unto you.* Having on ſome other Occaſions handled this Subject, particularly in treating on the fourth and fifth Beatitudes, Meekneſs and Juſtice, I ſhall be now the ſhorter upon it; only ſhall briefly lay before you theſe three or four Conſiderations, for confirming this Truth.

(1.) That the Scripture is very plain in this Promiſe.

(2.) That this Doctrine is very agreeable to the Belief we have of God's Providence.

(3. That right Reaſon and Experience confirm this Truth.

(4.) That particularly there is ſomething in the Nature of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, that makes it good.

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(1.) As to the Scripture Promiſes, I think nothing can be plainer than that of my Text, *All theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.* I ſhall give you two more, one out of the Old, and another out of the New Teſtament. *Pſa.* xxxiv. 9, 10. *O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no Want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and ſuffer Hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good Thing.* And *Heb.* xiii. 5. *Let your Converſation be without Covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch Things as ye have; for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* I could bring you a great many more to the ſame Purpoſe, to ſhew that (*a*) *Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* But for Brevity's ſake, theſe may ſuffice for ſuch as neither diſtruſt God's Veracity, nor his Ability. And to others, if there were ever ſo many more, they would ſignify nothing.

(2.) This Doctrine is very agreeable to the Belief we have of God's Providence; which is, that as in general he takes Care of all his Creatures, ſo more particularly that he takes Care of good Men; and therefore St. *Peter* exhorts them (*b*) *to caſt all their Care on him, for he careth for them.*

(3.) Right Reaſon and Experience confirm this Truth. The Man that fears God has many Ad-

(*a*) Tim. iv. 8. (*b*) 1 Pet. v. 7.

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vantages of the wicked Man, for being ſupplied with the Neceſſaries of Life. The Faculties of his Soul are in much better Tune, as not being abuſed to wicked Purpoſes; his Time is more his own, as not being ſquandered away in bad Company or Idleneſs, or the Purſuit of any ſinful Luſts or Pleaſures. His Abſtinence from many waſteful Vices, Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Whoredom, Luxury, and Prodigality of all ſorts, enables him to mind his Buſineſs much better, and to huſband better what he gets, than they who are entangled in any of theſe Vices. And if there were nothing elſe, that exact Honeſty, which he ſtrictly obſerves in all his Dealings, is a wonderful Help both to introduce him into Buſineſs, and to continue him in Employ; and he minds his Affairs more chearfully, as being confident of God's Aid and Aſſiſtance, whoſe Bleſſing he continually invokes; ſo that there is nothing, in the Reaſon of the thing, to hinder but that he is like to thrive and proſper in the World; not indeed to get ſuddenly rich, (for that is commonly the Effect of ſome hidden Piece of Knavery) but gradually and honeſtly to thrive in the World. Then he is much ſecurer in his Poſſeſſion of what he has, than a wicked Man, who is continually in Danger of being detected and fleeced. And particularly

4. There is ſomething in the Nature of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, that makes good this Doctrine, That a good Chriſtian ſhall not readily be deſti-

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tute of the Neceſſaries of Life. There is a Chriſtian Duty called (*a*) *Brotherly Love*, which our Saviour inſtituted with all the Solemnity that could be, calling it *a new Commandment*, and *his Commandment*, and making it the Teſt and Badge, whereby his Diſciples ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from all other Men. This Duty is nothing elſe but a very high Degree of Friendſhip, which he has eſtabliſhed among his Diſciples; all Expreſſions of which he has promiſed to accept, as if they had been performed to himſelf; and by virtue of this Friendſhip, there is no Chriſtian but will find ſo much Favour among Chriſtians, that he is not like to want Neceſſaries; for this Friendſhip will exert itſelf in a great many Ways of Induſtry and Charity for our Brother Chriſtian's Relief, before Things can come to that Extremity. It was this Brotherly-love that made all their Sufferings ſit ſo eaſy upon the Primitive Chriſtians. There was ſuch a Sympathy, ſuch a Readineſs to join Hearts and Souls, Pens, Purſes, and Eſtates, that there was no ſuch Thing as breaking any one of them, without breaking and reſcinding them all. And if they had attempted that in one Country, ſo extenſive was their Charity, that from all the remoteſt Countries, Supplies would have been ſent them, ſo that there was none of the Chriſtian Believers

(*a*) John xiii. 34, 35.

lacked

lacked any thing; but they found greater and better Supplies from their Chriſtian Brethren, than ever they had found from their own kindeſt Relations in the World. Then was that ſeeming Paradox of our Saviour's Promiſe made good, which we have, *Mar.* x. 29. *Verily I ſay unto you, there is no Man that hath left Houſe, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my ſake and the Goſpel's, but he ſhall receive an hundred Fold now in this time, Houſes, and Brethren, and Siſters, and Mothers, and Children, and Lands, with Perſecutions, and in the World to come eternal Life.* And tho, alas! Charity is now much decayed, and in the room thereof there is introduced a great deal of mere formal Civility; yet it is to be hoped there are ſtill ſome good Chriſtians every where, who will take care that their fellow Chriſtians do not want the Neceſſaries of Life. And beſides the Charity of Chriſtians alive at the time, there are great Foundations of Charity in moſt Chriſtian Countries, from the Beneſactions of charitable Chriſtians, who lived in former Days; out of which a comfortable Subſiſtence is provided for thoſe that are in Want. But tho the particular Ways and Means could not be all enumerated, whereby Relief doth come; it is enough that we have Chriſt's Promiſe here, that if we ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, all theſe Things ſhall be added unto us.

But

But there are two conſiderable Objections againſt this Doctrine, which it will be fit to remove, before we conclude.

Obj. 1. Are there not diverſe Precepts of the Chriſtian Religion, inconſiſtent with this Supply of all Neceſſaries, promiſed here to good People? Such as this ſame minding of Religion in the firſt Place. Is not the covetous Man, who ſets his Heart upon it, and makes it his principal Buſineſs, who employs his Thoughts, Time, and Care, and Contrivance chiefly about it, much more likely to thrive in the World, than he who minds it only by the by? Is not he whoſe Deſires after the World are boundleſs and inſatiable, much more in election to be vaſtly rich, than the good Chriſtian, who is commanded to be contented with Food and Raiment; that is, with a Competency of the good Things of this Life? Is not he who will take all Advantages that Intereſt directs him to, much more likely to lay up, than he who confines himſelf to the ſtrict Rules of Equity and good Conſcience, and deals with all Men as he would wiſh to be dealt by in the like Circumſtances? Is not he more like to ſave, who keeps all cloſe hoarded up, than he who is perpetually laying out in doing good according as he is able, and has Opportunity? And finally, is not he who is under no Reſtraints of Conſcience, but is ready to turn with all Tides, and to comply with every thing that is uppermoſt, rather than he will run the Hazard of the Loſs of

a Place, or incur any other worldly Penalty, more like to hold his Feet in this World, than the ſtrict conſcientious Man, who would chuſe ſooner to forſake all, than to keep it on ſinful Terms? But to all theſe Precepts of the Chriſtian Religion, I anſwer, 1*ſt*, That none of them make any thing againſt our being provided with a Competency of the Neceſſaries of Life; but only againſt our providing ourſelves with it in unjuſt knaviſh Ways; which Ways, if ever they are detected, endanger our utter Ruin ever in this World. 2*dly*, I never pretended that Religion was a means of purchaſing this World by Ways inconſiſtent with our Purchaſe of Heaven and Happineſs, for it is certain all our worldly Cares muſt be ſubordinate to our great Care for Heaven: (*a*) *For what ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhould gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul; or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* This may ſerve for an Anſwer to all the unjuſt Ways of getting or keeping an Eſtate. It is true, Charity muſt ſeem inconſiſtent with laying up much: But as long as we have enough for all the real Occaſions of Life, whether is it better that we keep a great deal of uſeleſs Wealth to look upon, or to lay it out both to do good to others, and to help forward our own Salvation?

(*a*) Mark viii. 36, 37.

Obj. 2.

Obj. 2. But how is this Doctrine reconcileable with the Doctrine of the Croſs, for which our Saviour would have us always be prepared? it often happens, that inſtead of having all Things relating to the Neceſſaries and Comforts of this World added to us, we muſt patiently bear with the ſpoiling of our Goods; nay, ſometimes muſt loſe our Lives for our Religion. I anſwer, that God is then no worſe than his Promiſe, when inſtead of the Comforts of this World, he gives us the Kingdom of Heaven. The patient bearing of the Croſs, is always attended with much more valuable Bleſſings than Wealth and Riches; the Loſs of which ſhall be compenſated both with an Encreaſe of ſpiritual Bleſſings here, and an higher Degree of Glory hereafter.

To conclude then, let us firmly believe that if we diligently labour for Heaven, and ſtudy our Duty in all the Parts of Holineſs, we ſhall not only be holy here, and happy hereafter, but ſhall be ſupplied with all Things neceſſary for us in this our Pilgrimage, by means of our own moderate Care and Induſtry; and without ſuch a vexatious Care, as to divert our Minds from the Study of better Things, ſuch as lead to Heaven and Happineſs: Which in due Time God of his infinite Mercy beſtow upon us all, for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake.

To whom, &c.

SERMON XXIV.

MAT. VI. 34.

Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow: for the Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself: sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.

The Twelfth Sermon on this Text.

IN these Words our Saviour concludes his divine Discourse against Anxiety, and the inordinate Cares of the World. In them we may observe these two Things.

I. Another Precept by way of Antithesis or Opposition to Anxiety. *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow.* II. The

II. The Enforcement of this Precept by two new Reaſons; namely, that the Morrow, when it comes, will be more proper to take care of its own Matters, *the Morrow ſhall take thought for the Things of itſelf*; and that the preſent Time has enough to do with its own Cares; *ſufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.*

I. I begin with the firſt, which is a ſecond Precept by way of Antitheſis, or Oppoſition to Anxiety; *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow.* The firſt, as I lately told you, was that of ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, which was encouraged with a Promiſe, that beſides the obtaining that Kingdom and Righteouſneſs, all worldly Neceſſaries ſhould be ſuperadded. This ſecond too of not taking Thought for the Morrow, is enforced by the Reaſons annexed.

Before I conſider this Precept in itſelf, I will take leave to conſider it by way of Antitheſis, or contrary Principle to Anxiety; that under this View, it may help to caſt ſome further Light on that Vice, from which our Saviour does ſo induſtriouſly here diſſwade.

Now looking upon the negative Precept in my Text with this View, it affords this Character of the anxious covetous Man, that he is not contented to take care for a Competency of the Neceſſaries of Life at preſent, but extends his Care for

them to a long time to come; for that is what is meant by the Day and the Morrow, the preſent and the future time. I ſhall not here conſider the Anxiety or Solicitude ſignified by this Word of taking Thought, having done that already in ſome former Diſcourſes againſt this Vice. What I ſhall now confine myſelf to, ſhall be to conſider the Bounds as to Time, to which we ought to limit our Thoughts and Cares of the World; that in purſuance of the Deſign of my Text, I may find out this Part of the anxious Man's Character. 1. Then, That our Care and Proviſion is to be regulated by the Uſes we are to have for it, is, I think, very plain; for that theſe Things are not the chief Deſign of Life, but only Neceſſaries and Conveniencies in order to it. We muſt then ſo moderate our Cares about the World, as to bear ſome Proportion to the Uſes and Occaſions, we may probably have for it. As a Maſter of a Veſſel, in laying in Proviſion, has under his Conſideration both the Length of the Voyage, and the Number of Mouths he has to feed; and it would be thought a very impertinent and ſuperfluous Piece of Providence in him, ſhould he lay in three Years Proviſion for a three Months Voyage, or as much for ten Months, as for an hundred. But ſome may reply, if he ſhould do this, what is left after one Voyage is not loſt, it may ſerve another. I anſwer, but has not the Veſſel carried ſo much leſs of other more precious Commodities, that might have yielded

yielded Freight, and ſo have turned to much better account? So we may ſay of theſe worldly Cares, when they extend far into Futurity. Have we not loſt our Time and Labour, which might have been beſtowed to good Advantage on the great Buſineſs of Life? Have we not made a very bad Calculation, and ſo wretchedly thrown away the Voyage of Life, which is never to be retrieved? 2. It is plain likewiſe, that whatever worldly Care we take, ſhould be a Care that is proper for the preſent Time, and that we ought not to anticipate the Cares of the future. This will be rendred more intelligible by the help of the former Similitude. Suppoſe a Maſter of a Ship deſigns one Voyage from *England* to this Country this Year, and another the next, if God ſpare him Life and Health, would it not be a much more rational Way to victual but for one Voyage at once, than to victual for both Voyages together? The Truth is, we do not act with half the Wiſdom and Sagacity, in the Affairs of our Souls, as we do in the Concerns of this Life; for the covetous Man goes by no Rules, he utterly forgets that he is making the Voyage of Life, and does not ſteer ſteadily to the Port of Heaven; he makes no Diſtinction between his Proviſion and his Loading, and never minds the Reckoning he muſt make one Day to his Owners.

But the covetous Man has a great many Pretences for this his anticipating the Cares of the future Time; for is it not reaſonable that in their

Youth Men ſhould work, and lay up for old Age? Is it not reaſonable that a Man, who has a Charge of Children, ſhould provide for them, to ſet them out in the World? And is it not reaſonable, conſidering the many Accidents and Misfortunes of Life, that a Man ſhould have more Strings to his Bow than one? All this is but a fallacious way of arguing, and doth not come up to the Caſe: For provided the main Thing be minded; that is, Heaven ſought after in the principal Place, and Holineſs ſeriouſly ſtudied, as the Way that leads to to it, all theſe Things may be purſued with an inferior moderate Degree of Care. But then, that can never be done, if we beſtow the chief of our Time and Thoughts on the World; if we gather or reap faſter than the Laws of Juſtice, Piety, and Charity, will give us leave; if we do not keep our Affections ſet on Heaven, and diſentangled from the World. It will never be asked us in the great Day of Accounts, how rich we were, but how much Good we have done. We may flatter ourſelves with an inward Thought or Promiſe, that when we have much Goods laid up for many Years, we ſhall then begin, and do a great deal of Good. If it were ſo, what is this but ſerving the World in the firſt Place, and putting God and our Duty off with future Uncertainties? Whereas God requires a diligent ſerving of him preferably to the World, and a truſting his Providence for all future Wants and Accidents.

But

But to come to the Duty itſelf, *take therefore no Thought for the Morrow*; we are not to imagine that all provident Care for the Future is here forbidden. There is a certain Care for the Future which yet is proper for the preſent Time; as when we lay up in Harveſt the Grain, out of which we expect our Bread for all the Year; and as the *Iſraelites* gathered a double Portion of Manna on the ſixth Day, to ſerve them both for that Day, and the following Sabbath. The Meaning then of this Precept *of taking no Thought for the Morrow*, I take to be only a Prohibition of thoſe Cares, which are more proper for the future than for this preſent Time. Every Day has its peculiar Work and Trouble; and if God ſupplies us at preſent with what we want, we are not to diſtruſt his Providence for the Future, nor to let the Cares and Fears of it enter into our Minds, but cheerfully to caſt all the Care of the future Time upon God, we doing all that is proper for us at preſent. Nor are we to think it unlawful, if God gives us Opportunity, to lay up for Sickneſs, or Old-Age, or for the Proviſion of Wife and Children, ſo that it be done without Anxiety or carking Care. Only we muſt be ſure to keep our Minds always in a cheerful Temper, depending upon Providence, and loading them with no more Cares and Troubles than we needs muſt. For after all the beſt Precepts againſt Anxiety, there is a great deal of neceſſary Care and Trouble we

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muſt take, ſo much indeed, that unleſs we part it, there is no dealing with ſuch a heavy Burden to take it all together. As if a Man had twenty Days Work to do, his beſt Way to go through it cheerfully, would not be to fret and tire himſelf, and ſtrain hard to do two Days work in one, but to let every Day undergo the Trouble of its own Work and Buſineſs. The chief Faults then here reprehended are an Over-eagerneſs to get rich, and a Diſtruſt of Providence for the Future: Like thoſe *Iſraelites* who in the gathering of Manna, tho they were promiſed that they ſhould have it freſh and freſh every Day, yet not believing that Promiſe, would be at the trouble to gather a Super-abundance of that Proviſion; the Conſequence of which was that *(a) it bred Worms and ſtank.* So much for Explication of the Precept, *Take no Thought for the Morrow.* I ſhall add but a little concerning the Connexion of the Precept with what went before, from which it is drawn by way of Conſequence, denoted by the particle *Therefore. Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow.* Now the Words immediately preceding were the Promiſe that *if we ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, all worldly Neceſſaries ſhall be ſuperadded.* And if we believe this Promiſe, it follows very naturally that we

(*a*) Exo. xvi. 20.

may

may cheerfully devolve all our Cares of the Future upon God, as to the Neceſſaries of Life; and employ that Care upon better Things; namely, *the ſeeking the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs:* This being a much ſurer way to be ſupplied with theſe Neceſſaries, at leaſt to be ſupplied with them with God's Bleſſing, than if we had directed our principal Care after them: As it was a much ſurer way for *Solomon* to come by *Riches and Honour*, to beg only of God *Wiſdom to do his Duty*, than if neglecting the Search after *Wiſdom*, he had ſet himſelf with all his might to ſeek after *Riches and Honour*. So now I come to

II. The ſecond Thing obſerved in theſe Words; namely, our Saviour's Reaſons for this Doctrine, that we are to lay aſide all worldly Anxiety for the Future. The Reaſons are two.

1. That the Morrow, or future Time, when it comes, will be more proper to take Care of its own Matters, than any Time at a diſtance from it. *The Morrow ſhall take Thought for the Things of itſelf.*

2. That the preſent Time has enough to do with its own Cares. *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* I intend to ſpeak to them as they lie in order.

1. That the future Time, when it comes, will be more proper to take Care of its own Matters. *The Morrow ſhall take Thought for the Things of it ſelf.*

ſelf. For clearing and proving of this Doctrine, I ſhall briefly offer to your Conſideration a few Particulars, which I think are included in the Propoſition itſelf. As

(1.) That it is not certain we ſhall ever ſee this future Time, for which we are ſo anxious and ſolicitous; and in that Caſe all our Labour is like to be loſt.

(2.) That it is impoſſible, ſuppoſing we may live to that Time, to foreſee ſo long before, what Circumſtances we ſhall then be in; ſo as to anſwer them exactly by all our Preanxiety.

(3.) That it is very poſſible, if we take our Aim in the dark, that we may do more hurt than good by the Methods we ſhall lay down.

(4.) That our Circumſtances may chance ſo much to alter, that when we come to that Futurity it ſelf, and to ſee all the Circumſtances of it in a true Light, we ſhall then wiſh that we had taken other Meaſures; and ſhall begin to pull down what with all our Anxiety we had been building up. All theſe will help to demonſtrate the Truth of this Reaſon in my Text, that *the Morrow will take Care of its own Matters.*

(1.) It is not certain that we ſhall ever ſee this future Time, for which we are ſo anxious and ſolicitous. And in that Caſe all our Labour is like to be loſt. In the twelfth Chap. of St. *Luke*'s Goſ-

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pel, *(a)* we have a Parable contrived on purpoſe, to ſhew us the Vanity of this Projection for the Time to come. There is a rich Man brought in, who upon the proſpect of a great Crop was a forming to himſelf Reſolutions, not of doing any more good with it, but Reſolutions of making more Conveniencies to treaſure up his Goods; and likewiſe of ſpending more freely upon himſelf than he had done before that Time. And withal he is repreſented as hugging himſelf in his preſent Plenty, and as reſolving to ſtir up himſelf to a more jovial and plentiful Way of living. *I will pull down my Barns*, ſays he, *and build greater; and there will I beſtow all my Fruits, and my Goods; and I will ſay to my Soul, Soul, thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.* Here ye ſee he was juſt beginning to reſolve to be a Slave to the World no longer, but to live up to his Eſtate. Whether he would or could have performed this Reſolution, we can not tell; for a long Habit of worldly Mindedneſs and Penuriouſneſs is not immediately or ſo eaſily ſhaken off. Only whatever there was in it, it came all to nothing, for quickly after his Life and his Projects ended together. And ſo it commonly happens. For theſe covetous worldly Men ſeldom take the Thoughts of Death into their

(a) Luk. xii. 16, &c.

Schemes.

Schemes. That one thing being forgotten marres many a good Project.

But the covetous Man may think perhaps; tho I do not live to ſee all the Fruits of my Carefulneſs, ſome or other will be the better for it; and therefore even in this Caſe all will not be loſt: It will do ſome good to my Poſterity or Relations, or ſome Body or other. To this may be replied theſe three Things. 1. That the Man himſelf who took all this immorderate Care is an egregious Loſer; for he himſelf has got nothing by all his Labour, he has beſtowed his Pains upon what turns to no Account in another World; *he has laid up no Treaſure in Heaven.* He has only gathered an earthly Treaſure, a Thing of which he has no Manner of Uſe, after he leaves this World; whereas had he taken Care to lay it out in any pious or charitable Uſes, it would have been like Seed ſown, which would have brought forth Fruit to eternal Life. 2. But this is not the worſt of it; for that Wealth, which we gather with much Pains, we are not in ſtrictneſs of Speech *the Proprietors*, but only *the Stewards* of it; and in the other World we ſhall be called to an Account of our Stewardſhip. It behoves us then to look to the laying out as well or more than to the gathering of this Eſtate; for if we do not employ it to the proper Uſes for which God deſigned it, that is, if we are rich, and are not rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, and willing to com

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municate, we ſhall not only not lay up for our ſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, but ſhall be further grievouſly puniſhed for our Infidelity in our Truſt. But 3. It is a great Miſtake in us, if we believe that our Wealth being left to others will be ſure to do them good. It is certain if Wealth falls into the Hands of an unwiſe Man, it will prove only a Means of ruining him both Body and Soul. And generally ſpeaking it is much eaſier to manage a moderate, than a very plentiful Fortune. The middle way between Riches and Poverty, according to *Agur's* wiſh, is certainly the ſafeſt. Too great Plenty is apt to make Men proud and prodigal, and laſy and luxurious, and to run them without reſtraint into all manner of Vice; whereas the having of a Competency with the Help of a lawful Calling to exerciſe their Induſtry, keeps them innocently employed, and free from many Temptations, that Idleneſs, Drunkenneſs, Gaming, and other Debauchery expoſes them to; when they are left ſo much, that they have nothing to do, but to take their ſwing. So much for the Conſideration of the Future, as of a Time, which we may never live to ſee. But.

(2.) Suppoſe we live to ſee it, it is impoſſible ſo long before hand to foreſee what Circumſtances we ſhall then be in, ſo as to anſwer them exactly by all our Preanxiety; or to grapple ſo well with them, as upon the ſpot, when we have the full Conſi-

Conſideration of our ſeveral Neceſſities, with all the proper Means for remedying and redreſſing them before us. *e. g.* Suppoſe *David* when he was a young Man, inſtead of reſting his Mind on that ſolid Principle, the Belief of God's Providence, that *the Lord was his Shepherd, and therefore he ſhould not want*; had gone about to vex himſelf with the Cares of what was Future, and at that time inviſible in his Circumſtances, and by his early Anxiety had ſet himſelf to obviate and prevent the many Troubles of the following Part of his Life; would it not have proved for the moſt part Labour in vain? for what Mortal could have foreſeen, far leſs could have prevented or remedied the ſtrange Caſualties of his uncertain Circumſtances? ſuch as the fighting with a Lion and a Bear; his Combat with the Giant *Goliah*; the dangerous Songs made on that Action; the Envy and Fury of *Saul*; the Friendſhip of *Jonathan*; the Treachery of *Doeg*; the Policy of the Court of *Achiſh*; the gathering of ſo many idle Men to him, and their chooſing him for their Captain; the Churliſhneſs of *Nabal*; the Death of *Saul* and *Jonathan* on Mount *Gilboa*; the chooſing him King over the Houſe of *Judah*; the Differences between *Abner* and *Iſhboſheth*, which brought over to him the Kingdom of *Iſrael*; the infinite Troubles in his own Family, by the Power and imperious Temper of his Kinſmen the Sons of *Zerviah*; the Inceſt of *Thamar*; the Rebellions of *Abſalom* and

and *Achitophel*, *Adonijah* and *Joab*; and all the other ſtrange Turns of his Life, which no Care could avert, and all the Preanxiety in the World could not ſtave off? Yet when theſe, or any other Events happened, God upon his Application to him furniſhed him with Wiſdom, and Preſence of Mind, to behave himſelf better than all the Preanxiety and Forecaſt in the World could have directed. A Man may as well pretend to ſhoot at a Mark at a very great diſtance, and in the dark, and hit it, as by Trouble and Anxiety to obviate the infinite unforeſeen Accidents of Life. And therefore all ſuch Cares are totally diſburdened from our ſelves upon God, who foreſees all, and will order all to his own wiſe Ends and Purpoſes.

(3.) To convince us that future Uncertainties are not a proper Object of our Care and Anxiety, let us conſider that it is very poſſible, if we take our Aim in the dark, that we may do more Hurt than Good by the Methods we ſhall lay down. And the Reaſon is, wiſe Reſolutions about any future Events cannot be taken, but upon Conſideration of all the Circumſtances we ſhall be in at the Time, when the Action is to be done. For if any one material Circumſtance be left out unconſidered, it may occaſion a great Miſtake in the Reſolution we form to our ſelves about it. As for example, if a Man ſhould lay down a general Reſolution with himſelf, as a great many Men do,

to take always the moſt narrow ſaving Method he can, this Reſolution will be found often not only to lead a Man to unjuſt and ungenerous Courſes, but to ſuch Courſes as will prove deſtructive of itſelf. Had not *Nabal* like to have loſt all thro' a little Penuriouſneſs? *(a)* And did not *Abigail* ſave all by a little Generoſity? *Judas* betrayed his Maſter through Covetouſneſs, and had never a Day to do well after it, or to enjoy the unrighteous Mammon. *(b)* *Ananias* and *Sapphira* thought to have put a trick upon the Church, by entitling themſelves to Relief out of the common Stock, pretending to have put in all their own to it; but the Fraud they were guilty of was quickly detected, and ſeverely puniſhed. And ſo many a Man's ill gotten Goods prove a Canker in his Eſtate, which at the long run conſumes the whole.

(4.) It is to be conſidered, againſt our carking at preſent for the future Time, that our Circumſtances may ſo alter, that when we come to that Futurity itſelf, and ſo ſee all the Circumſtances of it in a true Light, we ſhall then wiſh that we had taken other Meaſures, and ſhall begin to pull down what with all our Anxiety we have been building up. How many are there who have made it their Buſineſs to lay up for an Heir, who if they

(a) 1 Sam. xxv. 4, &c. (b) Acts v. 1, &c.

had

had lived to ſee what a Fool or Prodigal he proves, would wiſh they had directed their Pains to ſome better Purpoſe? How many have I ſeen on a Death Bed condemning all the Drudgery and Pains they had been at all their Life long, and declaring if it were to be done again, they would turn over a new Leaf with themſelves? As Age then brings Wiſdom, and an Alteration of Circumſtances repreſents Things in a new Light, it is much better that the Morrow take care of its own Matters, than that we anticipate the Cares of them, and by that Means both do them worſe, and make their Lives at preſent uneaſy, by overburdening them with Cares which do not belong to them. And this leads me to the ſecond Reaſon given by our Saviour in the Text; namely,

2. That the preſent Time has enough to do with its own Cares. *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* There is no Part of Life ſo free from Trouble, but that it gives us Enployment enough to anſwer it. While we are confined to crazy and indigent Bodies; while we are condemned to Toil and Labour, and nothing can be effected but with abundance of Pains and Diligence; while we are encumbred with the neceſſary Care of Families, and a great many weak, ſickly and troubleſom Creatures to give us Uneaſineſs; while the Return of the ſeveral Seaſons of the Year brings along with it a new Taſk of Care and Buſineſs; in ſhort in a World of Uncertainties, where there is a vaſt

Number of troubleſom Accidents to add to our Care and Concern; God Almighty, who would have us make our Lives as eaſy as we can, and keep our Minds as much as is poſſible intent upon better Things, forbids us to encreaſe our Trouble by forecaſting and foreboding, and anticipating of it before it comes; but by a cheerful Acquieſcence, and Dependance upon his good Providence, would have us ſerve him without Diſtraction, caſting all our Care on him, who careth for us.

And thus now I have gone through this excellent Diſcourſe of our Saviour's againſt Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Cares of the World; having in no leſs than twelve Diſcourſes explained his Deſcription and Characters of, and opened up and urged his Arguments againſt this Vice, without allowing myſelf the Liberty of offering any other. The Deſign of all this, which our Saviour has handled more fully than any other Argument, is not that we ſhould live in Idleneſs, but that our Hearts and Minds being free from the inordinate Cares of the World, we may more ſtedfaſtly mind and purſue the better Part, the one Thing needful, our everlaſting Happineſs, and the Goſpel Righteouſneſs, that is, Holineſs and Virtue, as the only Way and Means for attaining it; a Study which the many Examples of the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of Life do daily put us in mind

mind of, and which will infinitely anſwer all our Pains, and will not fail to turn to the beſt Account, through the Merits and Mediation of our bleſſed Mediator and Redeemer, Chriſt Jeſus. *To whom, &c.*

The END of the Fourth Volume.

